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**The Role of Popular Music in the Negotiation  
of Taiwanese Identity**

By  
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A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Music Department  
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2016

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the role of popular music in the negotiation of Taiwanese identity. Taiwan has undergone a number of significant changes historically, socially and culturally since the mid-twentieth century. After fifty years of Japanese colonial rule, the island came under the strict control of the Chinese Nationalist Party in 1945. From the time Taiwan entered a democratic era, following the end of martial law in 1987, moves towards Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwanese identity – which were suppressed under Japanese colonial and Chinese authoritarian rule – have increased significantly. However, nearly three decades later today, the political status of Taiwan remains unresolved, as it is neither an independent nation state nor a province of China. Taiwanese identity is not yet clearly defined and well-bounded due to the complicated political sphere.

My research focuses on the nature of popular music and its relationship to politics and identity in the context of Taiwan. I regard popular music broadly as a mediated form that is widely distributed in Taiwanese society. Such cultural production plays an important role in creating, maintaining or rejecting political and cultural identities. My thesis not only discusses how Taiwanese identity is expressed in popular music, but also how the identity of Taiwan is constantly constructed and negotiated through the medium of popular music.

The thesis is organised into five chapters which consider different aspects of popular music and identity. I begin by providing a historical overview of the island which provides contextual information for which provides the contextual background for understanding the social and cultural values that are carried in the music, and the implications of those values. In the subsequent chapters I look at popular music and its relationship with the government's political and cultural policies, as well as social and cultural movements in different political phases from the late 1970s until the present time. I focus on specific case studies from the 1970s to the 2000s, including the campus song movement, protest singers, nationalist Black Metal, and the 'Taike' phenomenon. Through the study of various popular styles and groups of different times, I argue that the evolution of Taiwanese identity that is developed in popular music directly corresponds to the evolving social and political landscape.

## Table of Contents

List of Figures	6
CD List of Music and Video Examples	7
Note on Translation	8
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>10</b>
Methodology	40
Chapter Outline	44
<b>Chapter 1: A History of Popular Music in Taiwan</b>	<b>48</b>
1.1a Historical Contexts and State Policy during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912)	51
1.1b Music and Culture in Taiwan during the Qing Period (1644–1912)	53
1.2a Japanese Colonisation 1894-1945	55
1.2b Cultural and Language Policies during the Period of Japanese Colonisation	59
1.3a The Era of the Kuomintang	66
1.3b Popular Music Under the Rule of the Kuomintang	74
1.4 Their Music on Our Land – American Pop in Taiwan	84
<b>Chapter 2: ‘Let Us Sing Our Own Songs’ – Yang Zujun (楊祖珩) and the Resignification of Campus Folk songs</b>	<b>93</b>
2.1 The New Modern Chinese Folk Song in Taiwan	98
2.2 Where are Our Own Songs? The Tamkang Incident	110
2.3 Our Songs: the Modern Chinese Folk Songs	119
2.4 The Commercialisation of Campus Folk Song	123
2.5 Yang Zujun – ‘Singing Our Own songs’: the Emergence of Taiwanese Consciousness?	129
Conclusion	139
<b>Chapter 3: Our Land and Our Songs: Local Activism and the Folk-Pop of Lin Sheng Xiang (林生祥)</b>	<b>144</b>
3.1 Lin Sheng Xiang and the Beginning of Environmentalism	147
3.2 Labour Exchange – Let’s Sing Mountain Songs	150
3.3 The Music Style of Lin Sheng Xiang	157
3.4 Movement, Root Seeking and Identity	165
3.5 Singing in Dialect, Singing Multicultural Nationalism	168
Conclusion	171
<b>Chapter 4: Taike (台客), Music and Identity</b>	<b>173</b>
4.1 Who are the Taike?	175
4.2 The ‘Real’ Taike and their Musical Life: The Decorated Electric Vehicle Show (電子花車秀)	179
4.3 The Creation of New Taike Music: LTK Commune	189
4.4 The LTK Commune and Taike	201
4.5 ‘Commercialised’ Taike Music	204
Conclusion	213

<b>Chapter 5: Chthonic – Heavy Metal as Soft Power</b>	<b>216</b>
5.1 Soft Power as Taiwan Power?	218
5.2 The Formation of Chthonic	222
5.3 The Music and Performance Style of Chthonic	226
5.4 Chthonic’s Role in the Development of Taiwanisation and Taiwanese Nationalism	238
Conclusion	245
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>246</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>253</b>
Bibliography in Chinese	264
Discography	271
Websites	274

## List of Figures

1.1 The Techno Third Prince	11
2.1 The Cover Yang Xiang's album <i>A Collection of Modern Chinese Folk Songs</i>	106
2.2 The Image of Li Shuangze	116
2.3 The Poster of <i>Green Grass Field Concert</i>	131
3.1 The Cover Labour Exchange Album <i>Let Us Sing Mountain Songs</i>	156
3.2 Chen Da Playing the <i>yueqin</i>	162
4.1 The 2007 <i>Taike Rock Concert</i> in Taipei	173
4.2 An Illustration of Stereotyping Taike	178
4.3 A Typical Decorated Electric Vehicle Show	180
4.4 An Original Decorated Electric Vehicle Show	181
4.5 A Medium Size Modern Decorated Electric Vehicle	182
4.6 A Newspaper Advertisement for the Yundong Song and Dance Troupe on 18 Feburary1956	185
4.7 LTK at Formoz Festival 2007	192
4.8 A Scene of <i>The Supper Club of Pig Brother Liang show</i>	193
4.9 The CD Cover of <i>Shining 3 Girls</i>	205
5.1 Chthonic Wearing Corpse Paint	228

## CD List of Music and Video Examples

Track 1	Deng Lijun. 'Longing for the Spring Breeze' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CpeOMy3-fE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CpeOMy3-fE</a>	63
Track 2	Li Shuangze and Yang Zujun. 'The Beautiful Island' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKIYSvLVTdg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKIYSvLVTdg</a>	114
Track 3	Pang Anbang. 'Grandma's Penghu Bay' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nj6smOEBd_8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nj6smOEBd_8</a>	124
Track 4	Li Jianfu. 'Descendants of the Dragon' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8kLPuBSruc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8kLPuBSruc</a>	125
Track 5	Labour Exchange. 'Let's Sing Mountain Songs' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oA4h-1IuJ6Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oA4h-1IuJ6Q</a>	145
Track 6	Labour Exchange. 'Night Buses' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Qy7MgboA8c">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Qy7MgboA8c</a>	154
Track 7	Yang Xiaoqin. <i>Traditional Sing and Tell</i> (唸歌) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BObHcArAGXA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BObHcArAGXA</a>	154
Track 8	Chen Da. 'Sixiang qi' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGxWdXBUM6k">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGxWdXBUM6k</a>	160
Track 9	Labour Exchange. 'If the Dam Can Be Built, Then Shit Can Be Eaten' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IJV-b1AZiw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IJV-b1AZiw</a>	164
Track 10	LTK: <i>Rotten Brain</i> - 'Revenge through exploiting Chinese women' (from 4:30-6:25) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtJmsxNhImA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtJmsxNhImA</a>	195
Track 11	Music Video of LTK: 'Cartoon Pistol' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glyYEBcuWKY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glyYEBcuWKY</a>	198
Track 12	LTK: 'Something Has Happened in the Village' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIS0_4NPF10&amp;list=RDtIS0_4NPF10">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIS0_4NPF10&amp;list=RDtIS0_4NPF10</a>	201
Track 13	Shining 3 Sisters. 'Give me a few seconds' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufi7eK1uEs4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufi7eK1uEs4</a>	206
Track 14	Wubai: 'Dust of Angels' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YspEQ7pIV0E">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YspEQ7pIV0E</a>	210
Track 15	A typical live concert of Chthonic <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAo002kINR8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAo002kINR8</a>	228
Track 16	Chthonic. 'Nemesis' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0sgpM2dfvU&amp;list=PLhLWkSWHgRwp0BH9_mbgVxVrIJ76lgSo5">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0sgpM2dfvU&amp;list=PLhLWkSWHgRwp0BH9_mbgVxVrIJ76lgSo5</a>	231
Track 17	Chthonic. 'Onset of Tragedy' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grfjDbRN4M0&amp;index=2&amp;list=PLhLWkSWHgRwp0BH9_mbgVxVrIJ76lgSo5">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grfjDbRN4M0&amp;index=2&amp;list=PLhLWkSWHgRwp0BH9_mbgVxVrIJ76lgSo5</a>	231
Track 18	Chthonic. 'Takao' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_UkowmQs30">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_UkowmQs30</a>	232
Track 19	Chthonic. 'Kaoru' <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6_C7EZ7b90">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6_C7EZ7b90</a>	233



## **Note on Translation**

Mandarin words have been Romanised using the hanyu pinyin system, except names of Taiwanese persons, institutions and significant proper names (eg. Taipei and Kaohsiung). These have been Romanised using the Wade-Giles system or other common versions in use in Taiwan.

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## Introduction

During the opening ceremony of the 2009 World Games in Kaohsiung in southern Taiwan, more than forty people wearing enormous masks of the baby-faced god called the Third Prince (三太子) romped through the arena on motor scooters<sup>1</sup> and danced to electronic techno pop music to entertain the audience<sup>2</sup>. The performance immediately caused excitement in the crowds and received loud applause.

The Third Prince is also commonly known as Nezha (哪吒). His story originated from the folklore and traditional religions of China. In contemporary Taiwan, where the folk religions of both Daoism and Buddhism are commonly practised, the Third Prince is portrayed as a playful, energetic but rebellious child deity (Sheng 2013: 391–392). The icon of the Third Prince is frequently seen at temple fairs and religious street parades. During the last decade, the religious figure of the Third Prince has been modernised and presented as a cute, playful giant puppet. The typical Third Prince wears an oversized traditional costume with modern fashion accessories such as sunglasses and white gloves, and very often the outfit is decorated with bold-coloured neon/LED lights. During religious processions, the performance of the Third Prince combines traditional folk practice with contemporary techno music or pop songs; therefore, the folk deity is nicknamed ‘Dianyin Third Prince’ (電音三太子; The Techno Third Prince).

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<sup>1</sup> Gao, Pat. 2010. ‘Dancing With God’. *Taiwan Review*, 60(1)

<http://taiwanreview.nat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=83089&CtNode=1227> (accessed on 11 March 2015)

<sup>2</sup> Chen, Hui-ping and Pan, Jason. 2013. ‘Techno-Dancing Third Prince a Big Hit Overseas’. *Taipei Times*, 21 February 2013.

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2013/02/21/2003555342> (accessed on 11 March 2015)



Fig. 1.1 The Techno Third Prince  
(<http://www.10000.tw/?p=18525>, accessed 21 June 2016)

The World Games that took place in 2009 were the largest international event held on the island for the past sixty years. The occasion was seen by the government as an opportunity to promote the island to the world. The authorities aimed to devise an “exquisite, modern and very Taiwanese”<sup>3</sup> theme for the opening ceremony, and the hybrid music and dance presentation of the Third Prince, which mixes elements of new and old traditional religion with modern performance, foreign music and local dance, was adopted to represent the country.

Since its success at the World Games in 2009, the Third Prince has become a cultural symbol of Taiwan and has been continually promoted to raise the island’s international profile in many ways. The religious figure of the Third Prince was invited to perform in various

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<sup>3</sup> Gao, Pat. 2010. ‘Dancing With God’. *Taiwan Review*, 60(1).  
<http://taiwanreview.nat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=83089&CtNode=1227> (accessed on 11 March 2015)

countries, including China, Japan, and the USA. To increase the visibility of the island internationally, a Taiwanese university student named Wu Jianheng (吳建衡) made a worldwide trip, beginning in 2011, wearing a seventeen kilogramme Third Prince outfit, travelling to places such as India, Egypt, Kenya and Brazil (Sheng 2013: 391).

In July 2012, along with more than three hundred Taiwanese people and students in the UK, Wu's Third Prince appeared in London to support the Taiwanese Olympic team, and to make a complaint to the UK Foreign Office for failing to recognise the island for the Olympic Games<sup>4</sup> (Prynn 2012). The rally was sparked by an earlier incident where Taiwan's national flag was removed from the display of two hundred and six national colours and replaced by the flag of the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee on Regent Street after a protest by China. During the march, Taiwanese people and the Third Prince danced to fast-tempo Taiwanese pop songs, proclaiming "We are Taiwan! Please do not call us Chinese Taipei".

Here, the identity of Taiwan has been constructed and presented through a local cultural icon like the Third Prince. However, the transformation and recognition of local culture in contemporary Taiwan is a result of a long evolution in its social, cultural and political history. Closely associated with the Taike (台客) phenomenon – which I will discuss later in this thesis – the local popular culture of Taiwan, such as the Third Prince, was widely regarded as low or vulgar, and was officially suppressed before the late 1980s. It is in recent years that the new invented traditions that evoke Taiwanese consciousness have been created in the search for the self-identity of Taiwanese people.

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<sup>4</sup> Prynn, Johnathon. 2012. 'London 2012 Olympics: Foreign office takes over in row after Taiwan flag on Regent Street is taken down'. *London Evening Standard*, 26 July 2012.  
<http://www.standard.co.uk/olympics/olympic-news/london-2012-olympics-foreign-office-takes-over-in-row-after-taiwan-flag-on-regent-street-is-taken-down-7978396.html> (accessed on 16 March 2015)

I use the cultural symbol of the Third Prince as an entry point into the complex political, social and musical landscape of Taiwan. In his study of Taiwanese history, politics and national identity, Corcuff describes the island of Taiwan as a “laboratory of identities” (Corcuff 2002: xi–xxiv). Because of its colonial history and lack of recognition internationally, the topic of Taiwanese identity poses a series of interesting questions concerning the politics of identity construction.

In this thesis, I use popular music as a tool to explore how the identity of Taiwan has been reflected, constructed, reproduced and negotiated during the period from the mid-1970s until the early 2000s. I argue that the changes of Taiwanese identity that we can observe in popular music are closely bound up with the Taiwanisation movement (臺灣本土化運動) which unofficially commenced in the mid-1970s. The Taiwanisation movement emphasised Taiwan’s distinctive culture and society, and more importantly, an identity separate from that of China. Although it was initially silenced by the Chinese Nationalist (KMT) authorities, the discourse of Taiwanisation was later developed by both of the current leading political parties – the KMT and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) – and has been maintained by both as an important plank of their political strategy.

Music is often used as a means to construct national identity, as Turino has claimed:

I consider musical nationalism to be a subset of cultural nationalism; I define it narrowly as any use of music for nationalist purposes. By this I mean that it is music to create, sustain, or change an identity unit that conceives of itself as a nation in relation to having its own state, as well as for state or nationalist party purposes in relation to creating, sustaining, or transforming national sentiment (Turino 2003: 175).

Turino makes the point that musical nationalism is formed through an ongoing relationship between states and political parties, and the wider sphere of musical creators, performers, producers and consumers. Taiwanese popular music has often been an important part of national cultural expression, and closely connected with the political sphere. It had been

considered as a valuable propaganda tool by both the KMT and the DPP, and has been repeatedly adopted to construct the identities of Taiwan. However, due to the different political ideologies held by the KMT and the DPP, the movement for Taiwanisation has been interpreted in diverse ways. Since the 1970s, the KMT faced radical challenges both internationally and domestically.

Although it is widely known that Taiwan maintained a China-centric ideology politically and culturally during the KMT's rule (Chang 2006: 189), to maintain their power in Taiwan, the authorities were forced to take on a more localised and liberal approach; thus a form of Taiwanisation was adopted and promoted alongside Chinese cultural hegemony from the early 1980s. Nevertheless, when the DPP came into power with the presidential election of March 2000, the process of Taiwanisation was extended, with the aim of de-sinification. By laying strong emphasis on Taiwan, the then government hoped to reduce the Chinese claim on Taiwanese culture and political ownership (Chang 2006: 202–203).

Since its commencement, the movement of Taiwanisation was an influential trend in the cultural and educational system. It also had a strong influence on the popular music industry. For this study, my interest is not only in official, state-led forms of musical identity formation, but also in forms of Taiwanese identity which emerge in popular culture beyond the official media, and sometimes in direct opposition to state discourses. I look at how Taiwanese identity is constructed and narrated in popular songs at certain periods of political transformation and explore the social, historical and political implications. I also look at how the identity of Taiwan was negotiated through the popular music-making under different interpretations of Taiwanisation.

I hope that this study may contribute to the discipline of ethnomusicology through its focus on the role of music in identity formation in Taiwan, which has been subject to a set of

unique political and cultural forces in terms of its national identity due to the complex geopolitics which surround it. It also contributes a fresh perspective to the study of contemporary Taiwanese culture and society through its focus on popular expressive culture, and by bringing a wealth of Taiwanese voices into the sphere of English-language scholarship, both by extensive recourse to recent Taiwanese academic publications and through my discussion of Taiwanese media sources in the sphere of the arts and popular culture.

### **The National Imagining of Taiwan: What does it mean to be Taiwanese?**

The issues of nationhood and national identity have become increasingly important and commonly discussed in the globalised era. Definitions of the word nation have been suggested in many previous studies. One of the most influential theorists of nationalism, who discussed and defined nation and national identity, Benedict Anderson, has examined how nationalism developed and operated in his book *Imagined Communities* (1983). He employed the phrase “imagined communities” (Anderson 1983:6) to explain the concept of a nation, which he views as an “imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson 1983: 6). Anderson believed that a nation was only imagined and invented because “the member of even smallest nation will never know most of their fellow member, meet them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson 1983: 7). The members of the community may not interact or be connected with each other; however, society is united by a “deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 1983: 7) between its people’s shared interests, which means that they may be identified as part of the same nation.

In the last few decades, Taiwan’s national identity has been hotly debated. Although contemporary Taiwanese people share “a clear territorial boundary, historical memories, a common bond of a mass, standardised public culture, a common economy and territorial



mobility, and the legal rights and duties of all members of the collective” (Smith 1991: 60), Taiwan is neither an independent state, nor a region that is unified with China (Wang 2000: 94). In his article, ‘Rethinking the Global and the National: Reflections on National Imaginations in Taiwan’, Horng-luen Wang argues that Taiwan is more of an imagined community than other nations due to its extraordinary political status.

Wang argues that The official Republic of China (ROC) nation on Taiwan, sustained by its ruling Chinese Nationalist government, is not often recognised internationally, therefore it can easily be said to be fabricated (Wang 2000: 94). On the other hand, the opposing Republic of Taiwan that is favoured by nationalists of the Taiwan Independence movement has never existed. Furthermore, although there are pro-unification fundamentalists who are prepared for the island to be unified with the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Taiwan is not formally recognised as a part of China (Wang 2000: 94). Hence, “the ‘nation’ in Taiwan remains primarily a matter of ‘imagination’, regardless of which ‘nation’ is being envisioned” (Wang 2000: 94).

In his article ‘Taiwan’s Quest for Identity in the Shadow of China’, Thomas Gold (1993) explores the political issues surrounding the question of Taiwan’s identity in relation to China. He claims that contemporary Taiwan is constantly under a series of Chinese shadows: the geographic shadow; the shadow of the three decades when the government of the Republic of China (ROC) established itself in Taiwan between the 1950s and the 1980s; and the shadow of the Communist-led People’s Republic of China (PRC) (Gold 1993: 170–172). Although it is more than two decades ago when Gold made these claims, and Taiwan has since undergone a series of cultural and political changes, I believe these three political shadows remain fundamental when it comes to defining or discussing the question of Taiwan’s identity.

Taiwan is an island located only hundred or so miles across the Taiwan Straits from mainland China, and therefore the geographic shadow of China cannot be avoided. Since the seventeenth century Taiwan has been a recipient of settlers from the mainland, and Chinese culture, including popular religious beliefs and practices, expressive culture, and local dialects of Chinese (Hokkien or Minnan) were brought to the island with the migrants (Gold 1993: 169–170). When Taiwan came under a half-century long Japanese occupation, beginning in 1895, the colonial government made efforts to weaken the Chinese identity of the Taiwanese people by forcefully implementing a policy of imperial subjectification (皇民化), which aimed to transform the island into a loyal subject of the Japanese Empire (Liao 2006: 15). However the cultural and ethnic ties between China and Taiwan were not so easily loosened.

The second Chinese shadow occurred when Taiwan was returned to China by the Japanese coloniser at the end of the Second World War. When the Chinese Nationalists (KMT) retreated to Taiwan in 1949 with more than 1.5 million of Chinese refugees, Taiwan regained its status as a Chinese province. However, the island was seen a temporary base for the Republic of China. The KMT claimed that it was the only legitimate government of China, and eventually it would recover the mainland (Brown 2004: 9). Nevertheless, as the languages, social and cultural experiences of the Chinese and Taiwanese people were different, since its arrival on the island, one of the major problems that the KMT faced was conflict between the two groups. In order to create a unified basis for its rule of the island as a secure base for its competing claims against the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese Nationalist government found it necessary to re-construct the national identity of Taiwan.

Thomas Gold (1994) draws on Antonio Gramsci's notions on civil society (Gramsci 1999) to analyse the society of Taiwan during the KMT's rule between the late 1950s and the late 1980s. Gramsci's idea on civil society focuses on the hegemony that is exercised by the leading group, and which involves constructing a "collective national-popular will" (Gold 1994: 51).

In his study of Gramsci's ideas, David Forgacs explains that "'national-popular' designates not a cultural content but, as we have seen, the possibility of an alliance of interests and feelings between different social agents which varies according to the structure of each national society" (Forgacs 1993: 187).

In the case of Taiwan, Gold claims that the collective national popular interconnects all spheres of economic, political and cultural life, including values (Gold 1994: 51). During the first three decades of its rule in Taiwan, many authoritarian practices were exercised by the KMT government. The party-state was strictly controlled politically, economically and socially. The Three People's Principles of Democracy (三民主義) and Nationalism penetrated most societal organisations. The education system of Taiwan at the time was directly interfered with, and heavily ideological (Gold 1994: 48–49); and the media and expressions of public opinion were tightly measured (Gold 1994: 48–49).

Although there are few historical records of popular resistance before the 1980s, when Taiwanese society was under KMT rule (Gold 1994: 49), I argue that the China-centric political ideology and the promotion of Chinese identity in Taiwan did not remain unchallenged. In my thesis I use campus folk song as a case study and look at how Taiwanese consciousness and resistance against the KMT shadow were hidden inside forms of political correct popular music. I also look at how popular songs assisted in promoting Taiwanese consciousness during the time when the island was under tight political control.

Gold suggests that the final Chinese shadow over Taiwan comes from the People's Republic of China (PRC). One of the main challenges Taiwan has faced is, its international diplomatic difficulties as China tries to keep Taiwan out of international organisations where it might be considered some sort of legitimate political body separate from China (Gold 1993: 172). Organisations such as the Asian Development Bank and Olympics have only allowed

Taiwan to re-join as a local authority: Chinese Taipei. Such challenges support Gold's view that Taiwan at present still cannot escape the shadow of the PRC. However, in this thesis I look at how international setbacks and challenges have stimulated the Democratic Progress Party (DPP) to attempt to renew Taiwan's international image by cutting its ties with China. The DPP seeks to characterise Taiwan as a unique, modern and internationalised country with a multicultural heritage. I take a Taiwanese heavy metal band as a case study to examine how new expressions of Taiwanese identity are created and negotiated through forms of culture in conversation with the international community.

In my examination of the development of the indigenisation of Taiwan, I draw particular inspiration from the work of Chang Bi-yu. In her article 'Constructing the Motherland: Culture and the State since the 1990s', Chang (2006) discusses how both authorities – the KMT and the DPP – have used culture to construct their own image of Taiwan. During the 1990s the process of Taiwanisation officially began when the KMT mainstream, which was led by Lee Teng-hui, raised the slogan Community of Shared Fate (生命共同體), calling for cooperation between different ethnic groups (Chang 2006: 189). Although, as Chang claims, the KMT's big shift in policies from the great China ideology to a Taiwan-centred ideology was a move to maintain its power in Taiwan (Chang 2006: 202–203), the new ideology was immediately taken up and reflected in popular music-making. I use the music of the Anti-Dam movement that developed in the early 1990s as a case study to discuss the ways in which the concept of a Community of Shared Fate was interpreted and exercised by Taiwanese people.

When the DPP began its rule over the island in March 2000, the process of Taiwanisation took on a new aspect of de-sinification. Under the DPP, Taiwan was promoted through a new marketing strategy, and was branded as a modern, economically strong and multicultural nation (Chang 2006:196). To achieve the DPP's goal, cultural policies that laid “emphasis on the recovery of place identity of ‘the local’ [Taiwan]” (Chang 2015: 1) were formed. I discuss the

Taiwan-centred political ideology and cultural identity constructions under the DPP during this period across the chapters on heavy metal music and Taike culture.

Melisa Brown (2004) explores the question of whether the people of Taiwan can be thought of as Taiwanese or Chinese. Brown challenges the common assertion that Taiwan is part of China as its cultural and ancestral origins are Chinese. Through conducting comparative studies on ethnicity and culture in both Taiwan and China, Brown argues that shared social experiences are the most fundamental when it comes to shaping an identity, not culture or ethnicity, as is often commonly assumed.

It is not possible for Taiwanese people to cut off their cultural, historical and ethnic ties from China, but the separate history and everyday social experiences Taiwanese people share made its identity distinctive. Brown's assumption is relevant to hybrid popular music-making in Taiwan. The artists discussed in this thesis all, in their different ways, envisage a Taiwanese identity that does not disregard or deny its Chinese heritage or past history, but they are also creating kinds of music that respond to and further the new ethos of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity within Taiwan in the contemporary globalised era.

## **Why Popular Music?**

It is apparent that popular music provides one of the most significant means for the study of the complex social, cultural and political identity of Taiwan. But what is popular music? And what can be gained from the insights provided by the study of popular music? The sociologist, Serge Denisoff, once claimed that: "Popular music is like a unicorn; everyone knows what it is supposed to look like, but no one has ever seen it" (Denisoff 1975: 1). Simon Frith gives a broad and flexible definition of pop, noting that "pop can be differentiated from classical or art music, on the one side, from folk music, on the other, but may otherwise include

every sort of style” (Frith 2001: 94). The definition of popular music continues to be debated. Middleton and Horn suggest two main characteristics of popular music:

From one point of view ‘popular music’ exists in any stratified society. It is seen as the music of the mass of the people, the lower orders, the common people, etc., as against that of an elite. From another point of view there is at the very least a significant qualitative change, both in the meaning which is felt to attach to the term and in the processes to which the music owes its life, when a society undergoes industrialisation. From this point of view popular music is typical of societies with a relatively highly developed division of labour and a clear distinction between producers and consumers, in which cultural productions are created largely by the professionals, sold in a mass market and reproduced through mass media. (Middleton and Horn 1981: 3)

By analysing the statement above, I find that there are many features of popular music which can distinguish it from other forms of music. First, popular music can be described as a commercial product, and is intended for mass consumption. Simon Frith has pointed out that the major difference between popular music and other forms of music is that pop is designed for the commercial market whereas other forms of music find the market only incidental to their existence (Frith 1978: 11). Second, popular music is the music of the people; it is accessible to a wide range of audiences and does not solely belong to certain social group(s); it is frequently engaged with the mass of the people, especially the younger generation of a society. Finally, popular music is often associated with urbanisation and industrialisation, which facilitate the development of technology, such as radio, television, film and the Internet; popular music is a type of music that is broadcast through those media and constantly repeated.

Popular music and songs are often linked by cultural elites – even by those seeking radical social change – with superficiality, simplicity, or sometimes low quality. They were regarded with deep suspicion by the Communist authorities and socialist thinkers in twentieth century China, who saw them as socially polluting and reflecting false consciousness. During the 1930s, cultural critics and commentators in China described the jazz-influenced popular

music of the time with the Confucian phrase *mimi zhiyin* (spiritless or decadent sounds, 靡靡之音)<sup>5</sup> or as “‘yellow’ (pornographic) music” (Jones 2001: 6).

Leftist critics suggested that the majority of those “decadent sounds [popular music]” (Jones 2001: 114) described amorous relationships between petty merchants and prostitutes. As this did not – they felt – reflect the real conditions of the lives of the labouring masses, they argued that, “We Must Eliminate Popular Music” (Jones 2001: 115). In fact, this kind of political unease with popular music is directly linked to its accessibility and its value as a tool for social change. On the one hand, a simplistic nature and association with common people, of popular music is perceived as a weakness. On the other hand, popular music has the power to influence large swathes of the population, and new ideas can be promoted through the lyrics of popular songs, which the 1930s Shanghai composer Li Jinhui described as “the easiest form of communication”, as they are easy for people to accept and digest (Jones 1992: 38).

John Street (2001) examines the relationship between rock, pop, and politics and points out that popular music is one of the most crucial political tools in modern society. Compared with other forms of popular culture, such as film and theatre, popular music can achieve the highest level of accessibility as it can be mass produced and is less dependent on factors such as training, technology and capital expenditure. Therefore, musicians of all political persuasions/ideologies have often used popular music to express or oppose certain political views (Street 2001: 247).

Similarly, Jacques Attali notes that music holds potent political power as he writes “[a]ll music, any organization of sounds is then a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community, of a totality. It is what links a power centre to its subjects, and thus, more

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<sup>5</sup> The phrase *mimi zhiyin* first appears in Sima Qian’s Han dynasty text, *The Records of the Historian* (Shiji). He relates how the cruel and extravagant Emperor Zhou allowed the dynasty to fall as he caroused with courtesans to the accompaniment of ‘decadent music’ (Jones 2001: 114).

generally it is an attribute of power in all of its forms” (Attali 1989: 6). Attali also believed that the ruling class seeks to control music to achieve its political aims and to sustain its power. He notes that “[e]avesdropping, censorship, recording, and surveillance are weapons of power ... this is the ability to interpret and control history, to manipulate the culture of a people, to channel its violence and hopes” (Attali 1989: 7).

In contemporary Taiwan, popular music is broadcast on numerous radio and TV channels; it is sold in many affordable formats, such as tape cassettes, videotapes, CDs and Internet downloads, as well as being discussed in magazines, on the Internet and in newspapers, and so it is easily accessible, and has the potential to find a large audience quickly and effectively. Because it is highly mediated, it is relatively easy to manipulate and control. Because of the direct affective power of simplistic music, popular songs become a very powerful tool for expressing and sharing emotions and thoughts on a wide scale, thus delivering political propaganda and shaping group identity. As such, popular music provides a unique opportunity to understand how Taiwanese identity has been constructed, expressed and negotiated through different periods of social and political transformation.

Popular music also provides insights into identity formation within global flows of culture. In his book, *Cries of Joy, Songs of Sorrow: Chinese Pop Music and Its Cultural Connotations* (2010), the anthropologist Marc Moskowitz, looks at Taiwan’s Mandopop (Mandarin pop music), which has been neglected in the academic field despite its great popularity in Chinese-speaking communities, such as China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Moskowitz stresses the value of Mandarin pop music, claiming that it is not a merely a “watered down version of Western pop” (Moskowitz 2010: 3). He argues that Mandopop is a new form of transcultural musical expression that is a hybrid of traditional Chinese and Japanese musical elements as well as US influence.



## **Constructing national identity through popular music**

Nationalism and national identity are closely related. Thomas Turino (2000) claims that one of the major functions of nationalism is to evoke sentiments of nation, which is a necessary part of nation-building. While within a nation, nationalism helps to maintain control of the state by the government, at the same time it provides a useful tool for marking a unique self-identity distinct from that of other nations. In his book, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music*, Simon Frith discusses the relationship between music and identity. He argues that music can provide a powerful tool for shaping identity as it can “stand for, symbolize, and offer the immediate experience of collective identity” (Frith 1996: 121). “Music constructs our sense of identity through the experiences it offers of the body, time, and sociability, experiences which enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives” (Frith 1996: 124).

Music can be adopted as a means of emphasising the sense of belonging and shaping an identity of a nation. Martin Stokes suggests that “music is socially meaningful not entirely but largely because it provides means by which people recognize identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them” (Stokes 1994: 5). In this thesis, I examine how political movements have been intertwined with popular music movements, how singers and song writers have used their creativity and performances to directly intervene in the world of political action, to shape the experiences and political understandings of their listeners, and to shape their relationship with the place they know as Taiwan.

It is well known that Western music has had a great influence on music-making in non-Western societies. Western musical styles have been directly linked to a set of modernising ideologies, and have often been invested with the power to bring about social change. Western

classical music came to represent modernity in Chinese music history from the late 1910s onwards. In his study of Chinese musical life in the early twentieth century, Andrew Jones (2001) analyses the series of reforms undergone by Chinese musical culture within the May 4th Movement. During this movement, a new generation of musicians and educators aimed to build a modern musical infrastructure in China, believing that this would contribute to building a new kind of Chinese culture, and aid in the resurgence of a strong Chinese state. Modern Taiwan has also inherited these associations between Western music, modernity and political strength.

Since the 1950s, the diffusion of popular music and its mass entertainment industries from the West has had a deep impact on music traditions worldwide (Larkey 1992: 151). As Peter Manuel noted in his survey of non-Western pop music, “the national element may consist only of language and such features as a preference for pentatonic melodies” (Manuel 1998: 221), arguing that popular music in non-Western cultures is typically a result of the syncretism and acculturation of Western pop. The transnational spread of Western styles of popular music was much less likely to attract government support in the twentieth century, but it has taken on the associations with modernity and power which were formerly linked with Western art music, and in the twenty-first century, national governments have been much more willing to associate themselves with popular music styles.

Contemporary Taiwanese popular music is formed out of the transnational flows of popular music which arise from its political and economic position. Taiwan’s transnational experiences also have had an important impact on the formation of Taiwanese contemporary musical culture and identity. I draw on Ho Wai-Chung’s (2007) idea where he notes that the transnational cultural flows “have helped Taiwan to embrace traditional Chinese music and Western classical music, and have opened new opportunities to foster existing Taiwanese folk music, contemporary classical music and popular music.... national concerns and global

imperatives for music cultures intersect with and sometimes reinforce each other...” (Ho 2007: 476–477). In this thesis I examine the question of Taiwanese identity as it has been expressed through different styles of popular music including modern folk song, heavy metal and punk. I argue that identities and ideologies are revealed and promoted in various ways, including instrumentation, use of melody, musical arrangement, and the language of the lyrics, as well as the performing style and image of the performers, the contexts in which they promote their music, and the statements that they make.

There is a general assumption that popular music’s role in nationalism involves incorporating materials from folk or indigenous elements, which affirm a national or ethnic identity as they offer the sharpest contrast to cosmopolitan forms (Turino 2000). In his book *Nationalism, Cosmopolitans, and Popular Music in Zimbabwe*, Thomas Turino suggests that indigenous *Shona* music and instruments (the *mbira* in particular) are frequently used by contemporary popular song writers such as Thomas Mapfumo. Popular music in Zimbabwe is like popular music in many other countries that have undergone processes of Westernisation. Especially while Zimbabwe was colonised by the British, European music and culture were adopted by members of the African elite in order to associate themselves with the white rulers.

Only following the 1980 revolution was there a revival of interest in Shona traditions; consequently, the use of the *mbira* and other traditional musical instruments became a new fashion in popular music. Thomas Mapfumo’s songs are typical examples of the blending of traditional African and Western popular musical elements. The fusion of musical styles allows not only the expression of national identity in music but also allows Mapfumo's music to reach various social and age groups within Zimbabwe. In the Taiwanese case, there are similar close links between political change and musical style, but here we find a more complex set of political and musical relationships, with Western, Chinese, and Taiwanese musical sounds all present in the mix, and competing for meaning.

Christopher Waterman's (1990) research on *Jùjú* music in Nigeria employs a similar approach to Turino. *Jùjú* is an important Yoruba cultural form, a type of popular music using a combination of traditional (such as Yoruba talking drums) and modern musical equipment (including amplifiers and guitars) musical instruments. Waterman argues that the mixing of modern and traditional musical instruments makes an effective statement of national identity:

... modernity and tradition may be mutually dependent rather than opposed processes; that Western technology can catalyze the expression of indigenous values; and that images of deep cultural identity may be articulated and negotiated through cosmopolitan syncretic forms. (Waterman 1990: 146)

This practice of adopting elements of tradition into largely Western frameworks has a long history in China. Andrew Jones suggests that Chinese folk melodies and music instruments were already being incorporated in a form of Chinese popular music, which was largely borrowed from Western musical forms, in the late 1920s (Jones 1992:9). In his study of pop and rock music in contemporary China, Jeroen de Kloet claims that traditional musical instruments or adaptations of minority music in modern Chinese pop or rock signify Chineseness as they reaffirm notions of cultural difference (de Kloet 2008: 157–158). The sounding of difference in music plays one of the most important roles in the construction of identities (Baranovitch 2003: 9).

In Taiwan, traditional Taiwanese musical instruments and languages such as Taiyu and Hakka are commonly adopted by songwriters in order to contest Chinese and Western hegemony, and to emphasize a Taiwanese identity distinct from the Chinese. However, as both acoustic Taiwanese musical instruments and Taiwanese languages originate from China, this is an ambiguous and often problematic identity-building project. I discuss how and why such musical arrangements come to shape Taiwanese identity through case studies of Chthonic's nationalist heavy metal music and Lin Sheng Xiang's protest music for the Meinong Anti-Dam movement.

Government control of music and other cultural activities very often form part of projects of nationalism. Policies of cultural censorship and promotion are usually imposed in one form or another. Although in most countries, primarily in the West, the national authorities have withdrawn from some of their traditional roles within broadcasting, as Malm and Wallis (1992: 252) state, the airwaves are a restricted resource which still needs regulating. Television and radio, in particular, can be said to be the most powerful means of broadcasting, and it is almost unknown for the national authorities not to control them. Cloonan (1999: 194–195) discusses the example of the United States, which has no state-run broadcasting services, but the government still seeks to control the output of the commercial stations via the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Another example is given by Martin Stokes in his book *The Arabesk Debate* (1992) in which he discusses government controls on broadcasting in Turkey, and the Turkish government's lack of enthusiasm for the popular music style, *arabesk*.

According to Stokes, *arabesk* is a type of Turkish popular music that originated in the recording studio in the capital, Istanbul. *Arabesk* is mixed music with both traditional and modern sources. The instrumentation of *arabesk* is very similar to traditional Turkish *halk* (folk) or *sanat* (art) music but in a simplified or modern electrical format. In modern Turkish society, *arabesk* music raises the question of social class. In many aspects, *arabesk* is considered a type of music which belongs to the new urban poor; the lyrics of *arabesk* are often related to poor immigrants who are trying to survive in a modern Turkish city and are about the hardships of their lives. As Stokes argues:

(Arabesk) flaunts the failure of a process of reform whose icons and symbols dominate every aspect of Turkish life... As well as a musical form, arabesk is an entire anti-culture, a way of life whose influence, it is often said, can be detected as an aura of chaos and confusion surrounding every aspect of urban existence, from traffic to language, from politics to kitsch. (Stokes 1992: 1)

Both the simplified musical instrumentation, which is seen as unfaithful to traditional Turkish values, and low class lyrics, which refuse to describe the beauty of the nation or enhance the unity of the country, have led the Turkish government – with echoes of the Chinese leftists’ attitudes to popular songs in mid-twentieth century Shanghai – to regard *arabesk* as a fraudulent, worthless and cheap form of music; consequently, *arabesk* music is never shown on Turkish national radio and television.

In ‘The Role of Music in the Creation of an Afghan National Identity, 1923-73’, John Baily (1994) discusses the powerful effect of radio and how it is controlled by the authorities. Radio broadcasting is an effective tool when it is adopted to represent, express, compel, unite and separate the national identity. Music broadcasts on the radio were under the strict control of the political authorities in Afghanistan. Baily looks at how the Afghan cultural authorities of the mid-twentieth century collected folk songs and traditional music, and promoted revised versions via the radio to construct a national identity which might unite the many disparate ethnic groups of Afghanistan.

In my thesis, I look at how censorship had been applied to Taiwanese popular music during the post-war period. Like Stokes’ *arabesk* music, many pop songs were banned from radio and television, and all popular songs had to be authorised by the local government before being performed or published. I argue that popular music in Taiwan has been constantly under the dominance of nationalism and in the hands of the authorities. My thesis looks at how all three governments, Japanese, the KMT and the DPP, that have been ruling the island of Taiwan since the late nineteenth century, have imposed successive cultural policies, including censorship and music reform movements, upon popular music to shape the Japanese/Chinese/Taiwanese identity of the island.

Baranovitch's research on Chinese popular music provides another example of the impact of state nationalism on popular music. In *China's New Voices*, Baranovitch (2003) shows the relationship between popular music, identity and state power in China during the late twentieth century. In the early 1980s, following Deng Xiaoping's "open door policy", *gangtai* music (popular music from Hong Kong and Taiwan), which is arguably the successor to the forms of popular music that emerged in Shanghai during the 1920s, returned to mainland China.

*Gangtai* music was initially regarded with suspicion by the Chinese Communist Party because of its soft, romantic nature which conflicted with the revolutionary cultural styles. *Gangtai* music was followed by a new musical style: *Xibeifeng*, which combined Shaanbei (northern Chinese) folksongs and modern rhythms, and led to a new rock music scene in Beijing. The song lyrics of late twentieth century Chinese rock often suggested a certain degree of political opposition, and the musical style also suggested a sense of rebellion (Baranovitch 2003: 35). Notably in the person of Cui Jian, and his song 'Nothing to My Name' (1989), Beijing rock was strongly associated with the Tian'anmen student democracy movement of 1989 (Jones 1992).

In the aftermath of Tian'anmen, Baranovitch notes that the Chinese authorities began to play two contrary roles in the popular music industry: oppressor and supporter. Rock music was strictly controlled by the state, which was suspicious of its oppositional associations, but in the 1990s the Chinese government began to co-operate with at least some rock singers, including Cui Jian, through the use of economic force and media control. Rebellious rock singers were no longer simply viewed as a potential threat but were co-opted by the Chinese state to promote its own messages, typically nationalist ones.

For instance, it is required that all singers who are invited to perform on China's televised national sponsored concerts must sing a patriotic song. The opportunity to appear at such events provides massive exposure for singers, and many are willing to comply with the requirement in view of the financial benefits of accessing mass audiences through state TV. As a result, the medium of popular music has become a powerful tool for enforcing expressions of nationalism. In addition, MTV and its juxtaposed images of music video and audio are carefully selected and controlled by the state.

As in the People's Republic of China, the Taiwanese government also uses pop stars and sponsors concerts as strategies to evoke sentiments of nationalism, using popular music as an instrument for national identity formation. I use the heavy metal band Chthonic as a case study to discuss how DPP government supported the band and used it to express Taiwanese discontent with specific international political developments. Nancy Guy discusses the way that the KMT used Peking Opera as a form of cultural soft power in its attempts at international diplomacy in the mid-twentieth century, promoting it as a Chinese national art form that only the Republic of China could preserve (Guy 2005: 43–52). In this thesis, I adapt Guy's model to look at how Taiwanese identity is today promoted internationally by the DPP through the use of heavy metal as a soft power.

The modern nation of Israel offers an interesting parallel to the case of Taiwan. In their book, *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel*, Regev and Seroussi explore the possibility that contemporary popular/invented folk music plays a key role in constructing the identity of the new nation (Regev and Seroussi 2004: 5). Being a young nation, that became independent only in the late 1940s, Israel has struggled to institutionalise a national culture that is commonly shared by its people, with their varied ethnic, social, cultural and historical backgrounds. Recognising the lack of a rooted collective identity for the nation, the state attempted to promote Israeliness through new cultural and artistic projects (Regev and



Seroussi 2004: 2). Contemporary popular music, which has often carried the ideological contestations and identity assertions of various cultural and ethnic groups, was thought to be the most vital way of representing and unifying the nation of Israel (Regev and Seroussi 2004: 2, 5–7).

Regev and Seroussi examined three major types of Israeli popular music that have been used in attempts to invent and create an authentic Israeli popular music: invented folk songs, also known as *Shirei Eretz Yisrael*, that focus on the nationalist ideology of the country; modern and global-cosmopolitan Israeli rock; and *Musiqat Mizrahit*, a musical style that combined European and Arabic elements and was mainly performed by Mizrahi (Jewish) descendants.

Through a study of various types of popular songs from different periods, the authors demonstrate that the evolution of Israeli identity developed in popular music directly corresponds to its evolving social and political landscape. Regev and Seroussi's concept of inventing a collective national identity through the production of popular music might appear contradictory to those more used to thinking about traditional music in projects of national identity building, but in a context where notions of place and local musical traditions were so implicated in complex politics of otherness and conflict, popular music offered an easier route to national identity building. This study provides lessons for our understanding of the way that popular music navigates Taiwan's own history of conflict.

Christopher Waterman (1990) argues that not all musical identities relate neatly to the nation's historical past. He suggests (following Eric Hobsbawm's theory of the "invention of tradition"<sup>6</sup>) that the representation of musical identity is often invented by political bodies. Waterman notes that a pan-Yoruba identity did not exist before the nineteenth century;

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<sup>6</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric. 1983. 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions'. In *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence, Ranger, 1-14. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

although consciousness of a common identity started to spread through education and the press, the separate cultural entities (tribes) of Nigeria had never been truly unified. While ethnomusicologists wrote about traditional Yoruba music that often referred to a tradition which was collected in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, however, Nigeria was only recently founded and becoming a nation (Waterman 1990).

Similarly, Nancy Guy (1995; 1999; 2005) discusses Peking Opera, which was brought to Taiwan by the Chinese Nationalist government after its retreat to the island in the late 1940s. Peking Opera was rebranded as National Opera (*guoju*) by the KMT, and used a tool for shaping the regional Chinese identity of the island, both at home and abroad. Guy stresses the significance of the political setting in enabling what was essentially a ‘foreign’ traditional art form from Northern China to develop in Taiwan, just after another half-century-long colonisation by the other foreign power – the Japanese – had just come to an end.

### **The Popular Music of Taiwan**

As a young nation, Taiwan’s musical identity is changing constantly in the hands of different governments, and the relationship between popular music, identity and nationalism is a close one. As Baranovitch suggests, popular culture is a “site where many different forces and groups meet, and the state certainly participates” (Baranovitch 2003: 272). However, with some significant exceptions, the importance of popular music to Taiwanese contemporary culture and society has not been widely researched.

Only a small number of Taiwanese studies focus on the topic of Taiwanese popular music, and the majority of these provide historical accounts of pop on the island. The Taiwanese ethnomusicologist, Jian Shangren (1997), for example, discusses the development of Taiwanese language (Taiyu) pop songs in Taiwan since their beginnings in the early 1930s,

tracing their development through the Japanese colonisation era, the post-war period, and up to the 1990s. Jian's article is informative, but he does not link the history directly to the changing political environment.

Taiwanese publications do provide valuable details on the local industry. In a brief historical account of Taiwan's contemporary popular songs (1975–2005) and the development of the popular music industry, Ma Shifang, Tao Xiaoqin and Ye Yunping (2012), list “the best” two hundred albums, as voted for by Taiwanese judges from various music-related professions, such as journalists, radio DJs and pop songwriters. The judges considered the originality, lyrics, songs and singing skills of the singers. This book not only provides a brief history of each album, but also gives an overview of the popular music industry and Taiwanese society during the three decades from 1975 to 2005. A similar book, *Mimi zhiyin (Decadent Sounds)*, published by Taiwanese music critic Wong Jianming (1998), offers personal views of the popular music albums and performers of Taiwan, China and Hong Kong from the 1970s, and provides useful information on the development of the music industry. It includes some discussion of the influence of society and political powers, and considers gender issues, but it is written in an informal style in the form of a series of biographical short stories.

Yang Zujun, a social activist, politician and a university lecturer in Taiwan, who will be discussed in more detail in the thesis, delivers a valuable first-hand account of musical and cultural censorship enforced before martial law was lifted in 1987, in her biography *Roses Are Blooming* (1992). Yang discusses the period during the late 1970s and 1980s when she was a young university graduate and involved in various social and political movements. Yang relates how she was inspired by the American Folk Singers of the 1960s, particularly Joan Baez, to adopt music as a tool of protest and resistance. She describes how an oppositional Taiwan-centred ideology was disseminated through music, and also how it was controlled by the government. She also discusses the ethnic and linguistic divisions in Taiwanese society,

and the conflict that they caused, and the way that using Taiyu became a symbol of resistance and an identity marker for the opposition group.

Yang Zujun's book provides a valuable, critical, biographical guide for my research. She relates her personal experiences as a young member of the elite, a Mainlander, who became active in the political opposition movement. From this book, I have gained a better understanding on how music was deliberately used to disseminate oppositional political ideology in this period, and how the government devised controls in attempts to counter or eliminate it. More importantly, her story highlights how Taiwanese identity and consciousness was constructed as a form of resistance.

In *Seeing Taiwanese Society through Popular Songs*, Zeng Huijia (1998) concentrates on pop song lyrics in Taiwan from 1945 to 1995, examining the interaction between the economy and the development of the music industry. She analyses both Mandarin and Taiyu songs that cover various issues, including gender and nationalism, as presented in the lyrics from different periods. Zeng describes in depth the social and historical changes that occurred in Taiwan and examines how social, cultural, and political policies affected the making of popular music. Zeng's discussion of the campus folk song is especially helpful for my research as it provides a wealth of facts and information on cultural policies and the social background in Taiwan at the time.

Although she agrees that Taiwanisation and the *xiangtu* (roots) literary movement had influence on Yang Zujun and Li Shuangze's Sing Our Own Songs Movement, Zeng believes that their songs were examples of promoting Chinese consciousness (中國立場) in order to resist Western hegemony. It is true that the Movement of the Campus Folk Song was formed based on the idea of constructing Chinese identity that is different from that of the American's, however, I believe that the Li's campus folk songs, which were initially considered politically

correct by the authorities and in line with the regime of the time, were actually used by Yang Zujun as a coded form of opposition to Chinese nationalism.

Zhang Zhaowei's (2003) *Who Is Singing Their Own Songs?* also provides insightful historical details of the campus folk songs movement of the late 1970s, and engages in the ongoing debates about the politics of the period. Zhang claims that the movement went through several phases, and the early campus folk songs were closely connected to high culture: a new form of art music developed to suit the tastes of intellectuals. The genre was influenced by *Xiachao* (夏潮), a left-wing university magazine that criticised both Westernisation and the Chinese Nationalist government.

English language studies of Taiwanese popular music, have perhaps been more consistently focused on politics. Among Nancy Guy's studies of Taiwan's popular music is an examination (2002) of the political reactions of both the Chinese and Taiwanese authorities when the national anthem was performed at the presidential inauguration of President Chen Shui-bian in 2000. Chen was known to the Chinese government as a pro-independence figure. Guy discusses how the music was interpreted differently from the different political perspectives. Another of her articles (2008) investigates the meaning of the Taiyu song, 'A Flower in the Rainy Night' (雨夜花), within Taiwanese society. This song was among the earliest popular songs composed on the island in the 1930s. Under KMT rule, the Taiyu language was largely discouraged. However, throughout the eight decades since its release, 'A Flower in the Rainy Night' has been adopted for various uses, including political campaigns.

Guy argues that a classic popular song like this serves as a cultural symbol with the power of "presenting a feeling of shared history, while at the same time allowing for a vision of different and more positive future to be imagined" (Guy 2008: 78). In my thesis, I discuss

how the style of Taiyu songs of the 1930s was adopted by the heavy metal band Chthonic in its song 'Kaoru'. The band released two versions of the song: a heavy metal version and an acoustic version that mimicked the Taiyu songs of the 1930s. Together with a video that features a romantic and emotional story in a setting of the late 1940s, the band reminds its audiences of a shared and troubled past when the island was under Chinese Nationalist rule.

In a more recent article (2009), Guy examines popular song lyrics about the Tamsui River in Taiwan, arguing that there is a connection between popular music, the identity politics of place, ecology and environmentalism. The Tamsui River is one of the vital natural resources of Taiwan, and since the 1930s it has featured in several Taiyu popular songs such as 'Tamsui at Dusk' written in 1958 by the lyricist, Ye Junlin (Guy 2009: 225). The banks of the Tamsui River in the 1950s were a popular place for Taiwanese people to visit, and they were presented poetically in many pop song lyrics. However, by the early 1980s, the Tamsui River had become toxic and polluted, and this was reflected in the Taiwanese pop songs of the time. Nancy Guy's article has inspired me to look at the connections between environmentalism and assertions of Taiwanese identity. I use the music of the Meinong Anti-Dam Movement as a case study and look at how the singer-songwriter constructs a Taiwanese identity through his resistance that are closely connected to the issues of land and environment.

While most of the research on Taiwanese popular music focuses on Taiyu or Mandarin songs, Shyr Ee Tan's (2012) book stands out as an insightful account of contemporary Taiwanese Aboriginal song culture. Tan starts the book with one of the best-known copyright legal cases; the unauthorised use of the voices of Taiwanese aboriginal singers, Difang and Igay, by the pop band Enigma for the 1996 Olympics hit, *Return to Innocence*. Tan moves beyond the case to explore how the Amis song exists as an ecosystem that interacts through ritual, cultural performances, popular music, art and Christian hymnody (Tan 2012). She also examines how Amis song culture is created and expanded by modernisation and cultural and

political developments in Taiwanese society. While, a focus on aboriginal Taiwanese music-making does not lie within the scope of this thesis, I recognise the crucial role that Aboriginal musicians have played in the Taiwanisation movement. This is an area which deserves further study.

Another academic work that has contributed to the study of popular music and politics in Taiwan in ways that intersect with my own approach is a doctoral thesis by Mei-fen Hsin (2012). In this thesis, Hsin explores the multifaceted issue of Taiwanese identity as presented through popular music during the martial law period from the late 1940s until the late 1980s. Hsin sees the island of Taiwan as a postcolonial society that was occupied not only by the Japan before World War II, but also ‘colonised’ by the Chinese Nationalists before martial law was lifted in 1987. Hsin adopts the notions of cultural theorists like Homi Bhabha and Edward Said, arguing that, “postcolonial societies are marked by the experience of their colonial past – a mark that remains long after such societies have shaken off direct colonial rule. The mark is manifested in the conflicts and divisions that can be traced back the colonial period” (Hsin 2012: 1).

Hsin argues that the model of postcolonial society is applicable to the case of Taiwan. The island’s longstanding social conflicts are the results of the colonisation experienced by the country under KMT rule. In the first part of her thesis, she focuses on how Taiwanese identity was manipulated and constructed under KMT control. Hsin looks into music-related cultural policies and argues that language politics played a key role for the KMT authorities in questions of identity construction. By imposing Mandarin Chinese as the official language of the country and by controlling the media, the government made attempts to coerce Taiwanese indigenous communities to adopt a predominantly Chinese identity (Hsin 2012: 3). Hsin demonstrates how Chinese nationalism and hegemony were presented in patriotic songs and popular songs before the late 1980s by analysing song texts.

Hsin also contributes to the debate on the Campus Folk Song Movement of the early 1970s, arguing that the movement serves as an example of the “taste culture” (Hsin 2012: 139) of the educated elite ruling class, and is also the result of the government’s dissemination of political ideology within educational institutions (Hsin 2012: 139). I agree with Hsin’s analysis that the campus folk song was developed under tight political controls, and that it converged in many ways with authoritarian values and policy. However, in contrast with Hsin, my thesis explores the ways that campus folk songs were used as a form of resistance. The anti-authoritarian messages projected in many of the songs served not only to speak out for marginalised sections of Taiwanese society but also began the work of negotiating space for forms of Taiwanese identity that were denied by the KMT.

Hsin’s analysis also reveals that the language policies imposed in Taiwan created conflict between immigrant Chinese and indigenous Taiwanese communities. The second part of her thesis focuses on the Taiwanese language (Minnanhua or Taiyu) popular songs that reflected social reality under the ‘colonisation’ of the KMT government. During this period, Taiwan experienced rapid social change; social inequality and the geographically unequal distribution of wealth are revealed through the reception and consumption of Taiyu songs (Hsin 2012: 282). Hsin compares the musical structure and texts of Mandarin and Taiyu songs, and finds strong contrasts between them. Mandarin songs are more likely to be literary, elevated and sophisticated in character, and more distanced from the everyday language of ordinary people.

In contrast, the structure of Taiyu songs is plain, unchanging, and simple; the lyrics are rough, unpolished and unsophisticated (Hsin 2012: 282–283). Hsin argues that these ethnic and linguistic divisions in Taiwanese society have important social, historical and political implications. The image of poor Taiwanese farmers and their Taiwanese-language songs is accepted and asserted by the Taiwanese themselves, just as the image of low social status and its association with the Taiwanese-speakers is accepted by the Chinese immigrants (Hsin 2012:



283). In this thesis, I discuss an urban musical movement known as the New Taike which takes up the stereotypes of low status Taiwanese culture, and celebrates them, often in an ironic, satirical style.

My thesis focuses on Taiwan's musical culture between the 1980s and early 2000s when Taiwan experienced rapid and profound political evolution. It is apparent that since the 1980s, aspects of local culture have been used to construct and articulate a new sense of the Taiwanese nation. I explore how Taiwan's musical movements became directly engaged in the world of political action, and directly worked to promote Taiwanisation. I examine how a new national identity was pursued musically by promoting traditional elements – including local culture and languages – within the framework of new musical styles. I also look at Ho's (2007) claim that "the role of the Taiyu music in Taiwan is now reversed from suppressing to promoting ethnic cultures and identities as points of a new collective identity: 'Taiwan people' with Taiwan as their ultimate homeland" (Ho 2007: 476).

## **Methodology**

Since its birth in the early 1930s, Taiwanese popular music has been widely disseminated across society. The power of popular culture to shape and influence social attitudes has long been recognised, and has been adopted as an important means to shape the identity of Taiwan by successive ruling governments, and also by individuals who seek political and social change. However, academic studies of popular music in Taiwan and its relationship to national identity are very limited. This thesis contributes to that body of literature in several ways. I have adopted three methodological approaches, textual resources, E-fieldwork and ethnographic fieldwork. Through discourse analysis of Taiwanese sources, including media, blogs and interviews, I have brought Taiwanese voices, expressions and conflections of the society into the scholarship.

I have focused on a small number of individuals, highlighting their political and musical choices, and the ways in which they frequently engage in different roles involving musical performance, political activism and governmental positions. I look at their choices of musical style and the languages in which they choose to express themselves, and see how the identity of Taiwan has been negotiated and expressed within particular political frames.

There are numerous publications addressing questions of Taiwanese nationalism. My own approach takes as its inspiration Edensor's claim that "national identity is grounded in the everyday, in the mundane details of social interaction, habits, routines and practical knowledge" (Edensor 2002: vi). In order to develop a better understanding of the relationship between identity and the Taiwanese popular soundscape, it quickly became apparent that, in addition to the academic literature, everyday media were essential tools for my research. By referencing television and radio programmes, magazine and newspaper articles and interviews, I gained a view of 'real life' in Taiwanese society as it is reflected in the media.

Throughout the process of researching and writing this thesis, I have depended heavily on the use of Internet technology. In her article, 'E-Fieldwork: A Paradigm for the Twenty-first Century?' Abigail Wood discusses the possibilities of using the Internet as a research tool for ethnomusicologist. She notes that although the Internet is not a physical location, it is a field where "people live their musical lives" (Wood 2008: 185). Wood offers examples of creative uses of technology for ethnomusicologists such as: conducting interviews via e-mails or electronic chat agents, creating a virtual space or community for reflection and discussions, or gaining cultural literacy in online music sites.

Although the physical presence of the researchers are absent from the 'field', which means losing the performative face to face contact, there are some advantages to conducting research through electronic devices, especially when it comes to interviews. Email or message

exchanges enable researchers to keep in touch with the field, or to meet people who are unable to meet face to face. Ultimately, the greatest benefits gained from E-fieldwork include the ability to establish and maintain contact with the field more quickly, cheaply and for longer (Wood 2008: 180–182).

For my own research field, the Internet offered me the ability to search and retrieve data from a large data store, and quickly provided information for analysis: both audio and textual data. Online Taiwanese newspapers, government websites, official websites of the musicians and bands, as well as social media platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and Chinese microblogs have all constituted important resources. As Taiwan uses Chinese as its main spoken and written language, a large portion of my research materials could only be found in Chinese, but Chinese language search engines enabled me to access a great deal of material from my base in the UK. Internet technology also helped me to make plans for my fieldwork and make contact with people. I made contacts with people based in Taiwan through emails and arranged for face-to-face interviews while I was still physically in the UK. In addition, information about concerts, exhibitions and talks were often available online.

However, I also encountered numerous challenges associated with using the Internet as a research method. One of obvious drawback with the Internet is accessibility. Although Internet has been successfully integrated into much of Taiwanese society, not everyone has access to it or is familiar with the technology, especially people who live in rural areas. Some of my interviews could only be done face-to-face. Furthermore, Wood (2008) points out that ethical issues and question of identity are potentially challenging when using Internet as a research means since face-to-face interactions are absent. For my study, one such disadvantage associated with using research materials from the Internet is the question of the reliability of the information, which can be falsified or made up. As it is not possible and not practical to verify the identity of users, my approach has been to avoid relying solely on a single source of

data gathered from the Internet without some additional form of validation or support from printed literature.

I consider E-fieldwork is an effective tool to research the complex musical networks of Taiwanese society. I gained access to a huge body of data by conducting research online, saving me time, money and physical energy. However, I believe traditional fieldwork cannot be replaced by E-fieldwork completely and should not be omitted. My trip to Taiwan provided me with opportunities to collect audio, visual and print resources, such as newspapers, TV programmes, printed magazines and literature, which I could not obtain in the UK. More importantly, although I am Taiwanese myself, ethnographic fieldwork in Taiwan led me to reconsider the question of Taiwanese identity from different perspectives.

I was born on the island of Taiwan about a decade before martial law was lifted, and raised when Taiwan was undergoing the transition to democracy. Like many of my friends and cousins, I was brought up by my grandparents in a rural village and only joined my parents in the city to start formal schooling at age six. In primary school and secondary school, I was educated under the Chinese-centred ideology. I learnt Chinese history and geography, and was punished for speaking my mother tongue, Taiyu, at school. My musical experience as a teenager and young adult was limited to Western classical music and American pop songs, as Mandarin and Taiyu songs were both discouraged by my parents and also by my teachers. I remember how my classmates were disciplined by teachers at my single sex secondary school because they read tabloid papers that discussed Mandarin pop idols and songs.

I left Taiwan to study music and have resided in the UK since 1997. To date, I have spent an equal length of time in each country. During my absence from Taiwan, it has undergone dramatic changes, both culturally and politically. Even though I am an insider and part of the Taiwanese community, I felt the need to re-discover the country and update myself with the

new information as I was brought up in a different political, social and educational setting. Communicating with songwriters, performers and music fans from different social backgrounds, and participating in concerts and other occasions, helped me to analyse my research from different angles. It also helped me to build a picture of the links between their Taiwanese identity and their everyday way of life, and to understand how this interrelationship affects the island's musical culture.

## **Chapter Outline**

Taiwan's popular music has been fundamentally influenced by its history and fast-shifting politics. The aim of this study is to examine the role of popular music in the construction of Taiwanese national identity in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. It will consider the roles of both the authorities and the song-writers, musicians, activists, producers and consumers of popular music in Taiwan. After a general introduction to the political and musical history of the island, I discuss four case studies relating to different periods and musical styles.

In Chapter 1, I provide a brief overview of Taiwan's modern political landscape and how it has influenced the development of popular music. Although my research focuses on contemporary popular music-making, modern songwriters often refer to popular songs and styles of the mid-twentieth century. They also reference traditional musical styles and instruments and other cultural elements that originate in China in order to emphasise particular aspects of their cultural roots. For this reason, I feel it is necessary to begin my historical introduction before the turn of the twentieth century to give a full picture of Taiwan's musical and cultural heritage.

Taiwan's national identity and its popular music have undergone a series of changes since the start of the Japanese occupation more than a hundred years ago. The first Taiwanese popular song was composed in the 1930s in the Taiwanese language. In addition to Taiwan's popular musical life during the Japanese colonisation period, I focus on how the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang or KMT) used popular music as a tool to construct and manipulate Taiwan's identity, particularly before the lifting of martial law. The chapter discusses issues concerning martial law, censorship and cultural policies on music-making and broadcasting before 1987, including restrictions on Taiwanese dialect (Taiyu) songs on radio and television. In addition, I will also discuss the influence of Western popular music in Taiwanese during the 1970s.

Chapter 2 discusses the Taiwanese Campus Folk Song Movement that flourished between the late 1970s and early 1980s. This movement was short-lived, lasting less than a decade, but it created a lasting impact on Taiwan's music industry. Although Taiwanese society, and the political agenda, changed dramatically a few years after this movement, this was the first time that Taiwanese youth tried to express their 'Chinese' identity through music. In this chapter, I explore the idea that the Campus Folk Song Movement served as a foundation for creating a home-grown sense of Chinese identity in Taiwan.

As the Campus Folk Song Movement was not directly promoted by the authorities, I discuss the motivations of the singer-songwriters, and how its popularity was achieved. I then focus on the musical style adopted by the movement. The campus folk songs were created to evoke a Chinese nationalist consciousness in Taiwanese society, one set in opposition to American hegemony. I also consider how the movement was subtly subverted by one activist singer, Yang Zujun, and transformed into an act of resistance against the Chinese Nationalist authorities. I explore how her musical interventions assisted in the development of a Taiwanese identity that was separate from the Chinese identity promoted by the KMT.

Following the lifting of martial law in 1987, Taiwan entered a more liberal democratic era. President Lee Teng-hui (李登輝), leader of the KMT in the 1990s, redirected the Party's political ideology from One China to a Taiwan-centred approach (Chu 2000: 312). A gradual process of 'Taiwanisation' officially began, promoted alongside the prevailing Chinese cultural hegemony. In Chapter 3, I explore how the concept of Taiwanisation was taken up by the Taiwanese music industry through the band Labour Exchange (交工樂隊), and its Anti-Dam protest music. The band used traditional music instruments and local language lyrics to construct a shared identity closely linked to the natural environment of Taiwan, drawing together environmental activism and minority rights in the formation of a new Taiwanese identity. Drawing on Turino's (2000) theory of identity in music, I argue that indigenous elements offer the sharpest contrast to the music of other countries and mark a unique self or national identity.

In Chapter 4, I use the Taiwanese subculture, Taiké (台客), as a means of understanding Taiwanese popular musical culture and identity after the year 2000. In the past, Taiké was used as a pejorative term to describe the vulgar or uncultured people of Taiwan's rural south. During the late 1990s, Taiké culture was adopted as a tool to challenge Taiwanese political and social norms by a group of students who formed the band LTK Commune. The band adopted offensive language and obscene theatrical scenes rooted in Taiké culture to stage a rebellion against political and social injustice. In the following years, as Taiwanese independence was increasingly discussed in the political sphere, Taiké culture was given a new definition. This chapter focuses on the interaction between the new Taiké music and Taiwan's historical and social background. It explores the musical styles and political meanings of new Taiké music, and discusses how acts of parody and protest quickly move to the mainstream in Taiwan's fast-changing political landscape.

Chapter 5 focuses on the way that Taiwanese popular music has been deployed on the international stage by the DPP as a form of soft power. I use the Taiwanese heavy metal band Chthonic (閃靈) as my case study. The band was sponsored by the DPP to conduct an international tour that aimed to protest Taiwan's lost bid to re-join the UN. The loud and dissident heavy metal sound served as a symbol of Taiwan's diplomatic unease. I consider the links between metal music and nationalist movements worldwide, and the particularities of how Chthonic uses heavy metal combined with aspects of tradition to convey a mythologised and violent sense of Taiwanese history and identity.



## Chapter 1: A History of Popular Music in Taiwan

On 1 January 2002, at least 50,000 people gathered together in front of the Presidential Office to join then-president Chen Shui-bian, who was also the chairman of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), for the New Year flag-raising ceremony. Music and dance performances were presented by both the military band and by private groups to entertain the crowd. Taiwanese well-known folk songs such as 'Four Seasons Red' and 'Songs of the Farming Village' were played by Fu Jen Catholic University's orchestra to create a distinctive Taiwanese atmosphere<sup>7</sup>. Traditionally, music and dance played important roles in the inaugural and celebratory events of the Chinese Nationalist Party, which had ruled the island for five decades since the end of the Second World War in 1945. Even after the change of power in 2000, this practice remained.

However, the performance on New Year's Day in 2002 was different from other years. In addition to the usual performances of military bands, aboriginal music, which had never been performed during any official ceremony, was also presented on the stage. The national anthem of Taiwan was performed in an aboriginal version by the aboriginal lawmaker, May Chin.<sup>8</sup> The ceremony was concluded by the then-President Chen leading the crowds chanting patriotic slogans such as "Long Live Freedom" and "Developed Formosa Taiwan". The slogans were distinctive, as former Taiwanese presidents had always addressed the island as The Republic of China.

Chen's patriotic slogans and Chin's indigenous versions of national anthem and presentations of Taiwanese indigenous music together formed the New Year flag-raising ceremony of 2002. It was a unique event carrying a strong political message. It reflected the

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<sup>7</sup> Huang, Sandy. 2002. 'A colourful New Year for Taiwan'. *Taipei Times*, 02 January 2002.

<http://www.taipetimes.com/News/local/archives/2002/01/02/0000118254> (accessed on 12 December 2007)

<sup>8</sup> May Chin was a former songstress and actress. One of her best-known performances was in the film *The Wedding Banquet*, directed by the Oscar-winning Taiwanese director Ang Lee.

search for the self-identity of the Taiwanese people. Since the seventeenth century, Taiwan has been a colony governed by many nations. Due to its multifaceted history, the island has been wrought by various political rulers and indigenous culture of Taiwan was largely suppressed under most external rule. It is only in recent years it has begun to receive attention and be recognised as a heritage on a national scale.

The example of the New Year flag-raising ceremony in 2002 offered clear indications that the political and social landscapes of Taiwan were complex. Throughout the last century, the country has experienced continuous change on an historical, economic and political level, and construction of a national identity has been a tremendously challenging task. Wang (2000) draws on Benedict Anderson's idea of "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) to describe Taiwan. In his article, 'Rethinking the Global and the National: Reflections on National Imaginations in Taiwan', Horng-luen Wang has argued that Taiwan is more of an imagined community than other nations because the island is neither an independent state, nor a region that is unified with China (Wang 2000: 94).

Taiwan has clear territorial boundaries; however, its historical memories, language and culture are shared with China as most of the Taiwanese populations are descendants of the Chinese who had emigrated across the Taiwan Strait from China to Taiwan over different historical periods. The People's Republic of China (PRC) had always officially advocated the One China policy and claims that Taiwan is ethnically Han and therefore should be part of the Chinese nation (Brown 2004: 2). Despite the geographical division, and the political and social isolation between China and Taiwan before 1987, both states share common roots resulting from the widespread imposition onto the island by the Nationalist government of a Chinese identity and consciousness. However, more recently the equivocal cross-straits relationship had led to new political questions and the creation of new Taiwanese cultural and national identity to one that is distinct from that of China.

The 2002 New Year flag-raising ceremony was not the first occasion that the Taiwanese authorities have used indigenous Taiwanese in the national agenda. The Taiwanese indigenous pop diva, A-mei, was featured in Chen Shui-bian's year 2000 presidential inauguration singing the national anthem of Taiwan. The Chinese media expressed dissatisfaction with the pop singer's appearance (Guy 2002: 96–119) with the accusation that her presence symbolically supported Taiwan's independence. The singer was not only well known in Taiwan, but also in China and other Chinese speaking communities worldwide. Following her performance of the national anthem at Chen's inauguration, all of A-mei's music, advertisements, concerts and television programmes were cancelled all across China. Furthermore the Chinese authorities imposed a ban on the singer from performing in China for a period of three years. A-mei was finally given permission in 2004 to return to China to perform following a clarification during a Beijing-based TV interview, that she never intentionally mixed politics with entertainment (Chang 2011: 68).

As a pop singer, A-mei became involved in political debates in spite of her protestations that it was unintentional, and this example offers a clear indication that politics plays a significant role in Taiwan's musical life. This chapter will outline the historical, political and social background in Taiwan, which is essential to understand popular music and its implications in Taiwanese society. In addition, the chapter will introduce and discuss cultural policies, particularly those that are music-related. Next will be a consideration of the role and representation of popular music in the construction of a national identity of contemporary Taiwan during the various political periods between 1895 and 2010, with a particular focus on popular music as a form of cultural politics to identify the extent to which politics and cultures are interconnected and used to influence the evolution of a national identity and nationhood in Taiwan.

### **1.1a Historical Contexts and State Policy during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912)**

‘Taiwan’ in Chinese characters means ‘Terrace bay’ (臺灣). It is an isolated island situated in the south-eastern part of Mainland China. The island is separated from Mainland China by the Taiwan Straits. The majority of country’s population at present are Han Chinese, however, they are the descendants of Chinese immigrants who have been migrating and settling on the island of Taiwan since time immemorial. Its first inhabitants left no written records of their origins, though anthropologists have sufficient evidence to suggest that nation’s indigenous people are of Malayo-Polynesian ancestry whose language belongs to the Austronesian family (Guy 2005: 13; Shepherd 1993: 28).

Before it was given the status of a province of China in 1886, Taiwan had been colonised by a number of different powers including the Spanish (from 1626 to 1642) and Dutch empires (from 1624 to 1662) since the seventeenth century. After a thirty-eight year stronghold on the island, the Dutch were defeated and Taiwan was claimed in 1662 by the Chinese military General, Zheng Chenggong [鄭成功]. During Cheng’s regime the island underwent extensive changes, particularly in term of populations. Prior to the arrival of Cheng, indigenous people were the main inhabitants of Taiwan. Cheng’s invasion of the island in 1661 brought in 30,000 Han Chinese (China’s majority ethnic group), of whom the majority were soldiers (Shepherd 1993: 96).

The Han Chinese population that came with Cheng rapidly expanded and it was estimated that Chinese Han populations had reached 100,000 during the two decades of Cheng’s rule (Roy 2003: 18). The indigenous peoples of Taiwan, however, were soon to become a minority group. Zheng’s administration witnessed the worsening of Han–indigenous relations (Shepherd 1993). As unequal tax and trade systems between the Han and indigenous people were imposed, the indigenous were forced to migrate into the mountains due to the loss of their land properties (Roy 2003: 13). Some indigenous Taiwanese, however, did not flee to the highlands from the

plains, choosing instead to become assimilated with the Han (Brown 2004: 35) through intermarriage and intercultural processes.

The island of Taiwan did not stay under the control of China for long. In 1644, the Ming dynasty collapsed and the ruling power of the country was taken over by the Qing regime (1644–1912). As a loyalist of Ming, Zheng Chenggong transformed Taiwan into a military base and hoped to conquer the Qing and restore the Ming dynasty. Following Zheng's move, China ceased all relations and support to Taiwan ceased. The Zheng regime ended in 1683 after surrender to the Qing.

Taiwan was governed by Zheng for only for two decades until 1683. The island was taken over by the Qing authorities at the end of Zheng's rule and incorporated into the Chinese Empire not as a province, but as a prefecture of Fujian Province (Roy 2003: 19). However, Chinese rule on the island was nominal and the authorities showed little interested in developing Taiwan. The island was left as an isolated frontier of the Qing dynasty of Han peasants and highland indigenous peoples. The poor governance of Taiwan by the Chinese ruler resulted in a number of uprisings against the government and the violence between Chinese Han and indigenous peoples increased. It was only after 1885 that the Chinese Qing dynasty officially absorbed Taiwan and made it the twenty-second province of China, following which the Chinese finally initiated administrative developments on the island.

During the two centuries of negligible Qing rule on the island, from 1683 to 1885, the Chinese authorities intended to reduce the number of emigrants from China to Taiwan. Nonetheless, drawn by Taiwan's virgin land and economic opportunities, the numbers of Chinese migrants entering Taiwan sharply increased (Roy 2003: 12; Lamley 1981: 296), despite many émigrés had an illegal status. It was estimated that nearly three million Chinese had settled in Taiwan by 1895. Moreover nearly all of the Chinese settlers who traversed the Taiwan Strait were from the coastal provinces of China, either from southern Fujian or eastern

Guangdong Provinces. Those from Fujian were speakers of a local dialect, Hoklo, and ethnically were also referred to as Hoklo (河洛人), while the other immigrant group from Guangdong spoke Hakka (客家) and were called the Hakka people. The Hoklo from Fujian Province was the majority ethnic group comprising eighty-two per cent of the whole Chinese population settled in Taiwan at the time (Lamley 1981: 291–292).

### **1.1b Music and Culture in Taiwan during the Qing Period (1644–1912)**

The majority of people who migrated from China established themselves on the western part of the island where the plains were. With a large number of migrations from China, Taiwan became a multi-ethnic island. Chinese culture, however, was also conveyed across the strait with the settlers. For instance, it is evident in the numerous analyses by Taiwanese scholars' that traditional Taiwanese music and folksongs, such as *nanguan* (南管) and *beiguan* (北管) were brought in by the migrants from China (Chen 1997). Both *nanguan* and *beiguan* music originated from Fujian Province. The term *nanguan* means 'southern pipe' which suggested it was a musical genre originating from the southern part of Fujian. *Nanguan* is a small-scale Chinese instrumental ensemble and sometimes performed with song repertoires.

The *nanguan* ensemble consisted of five main musical instruments, namely *pipa* (pear-shaped four-stringed lute), *sanxian* (three stringed plucked lute), *erxian* (two stringed fiddle), *dongxiao* (a bamboo flute) and clappers (Chen 1997: 42). The lyrical contents of *nanguan* singing were poetic (Lin 2001: 74). During the nineteenth century many amateur *nanguan* music clubs were established in Taiwan. Traditionally, only male members who were predominantly from the social elite gained entrance to these clubs (Lin 2001: 49).

In contrast to *nanguan* music, *beiguan* from Northern Fujian involved a larger number of musical instruments and a theatrical and operatic style of performance. In addition to traditional Chinese wind and string musical instruments, percussion was also used. Although

both *beiguan* and *nanguan* emanated from the southern provinces of China, there were dissimilarities between the two in terms of the musical genres, use of instrumentation and manner of performance. One of the early distinctive differences between the two was the use of language in the song repertoires. Still a focus of on-going debate is which language was used in *beiguan* opera, although it was clearly none of Taiwan's local dialects such as Hoklo or Hakka (Guy 2005: 28). By contrast, *nanguan* music adopted Hoklo for the most part. The differences between the *beiguan* and *nanguan* also included musical style. Compared with *beiguan*, the music of *nanguan* was more sentimental and expressive as the storyline of the plots were mainly based on romance (Lin 2001: 74). On the other hand, themes of martial arts were commonly seen in *beiguan*.

The music of *nanguan* and *beiguan* were both very popular in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Taiwanese society. Musical performances of *nanguan* and *beiguan* were held during life cycle events such as weddings or birthdays, as well as at regular performances at temples for religious festivals. Furthermore, Chinese popular entertainment such as *budaixi* (布袋戲 puppet theatre) was amongst the most commonly available in Taiwanese society. The first recorded history of *budaixi* can be traced back to the early Qing dynasty (1644–1912); described in the *Jinjiang County Record* (晉江縣志) in the South of Fujian (Chang and Cheng 2003: 86) as the earliest form of the puppet theatre. Taiwanese scholars estimate that migrants from Fujian province of China brought *budaixi* to Taiwan in the early nineteenth century (Chang and Cheng 2003: 87).

The varied plots of Taiwanese *budaixi* included classic Chinese vernacular fictions such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (San Guo Yan Yi) and *Journey to the West* (Xi You Ji) (Silvio 2007: 288). The earliest performances of *budaixi* in Taiwan were accompanied by either *nanguan* or *beiguan* music. In most instances, *beiguan* music was adopted for military and historical dramas as it was loud and lively. On the other hand, soft, lyrical *nanguan* music was

normally used to accompany more expressive plots such as romance (Silvio 2007: 288). However, the accompanying music of *budaixi* was later simplified with only the playing of *beiguan* music during the *budaixi* performance, as it was the most common and popular genre (Chang and Cheng 2003: 91–92).

*Beiguan*, *nanguan*, and *budaixi* originated from China and were adopted and later developed in Taiwan as indigenous musical genres. Some of the pre-existing traditional music of the Taiwanese indigenous people also survived throughout different historical periods of outside rule. However, since the Chinese population quickly expanded from the late seventeenth century, the indigenous people gradually became an ethnic minority. Moreover, unequal social, political and economic policies towards the non-Han population restricted the aborigines in competing with the newly arrived Chinese settlers. From the turn of the eighteenth until the late nineteenth century, the Han Chinese and their culture dominated Taiwanese society.

### **1.2a Japanese Colonisation 1894-1945**

In his article, ‘Western and Japanese Colonialism: Some Primary Comparisons’, Gann (1984) suggests that in the late nineteenth century while contemporary western colonisers enforced their ruling power on distanced colonies for economic motives, Japan concentrated on military expansion. Colonialism conformed to Japan’s notions of self-defence. By making the country a strong military, political and industrial power, Japan would be able to prevent or defeat threats from the west. Unlike Western colonisers, financial motives played only a minor role in the creation of the Japanese empire.

It was the prestige that Japan desired as at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, nationalists regarded colonisation as a status symbol. The Japanese were impressed with Western colonialism and believed that colonisation was an effective means by



which to expand its power. Japan first focused its colonial ambitions on neighbouring territories, including Taiwan and Korea (Gann 1984: 497–525). Following the defeat in the Sino-Japanese war (1894–1895), the island of Taiwan was ceded to Japan by the Chinese Qing dynasty in 1895 under the Treaty of Shinomoseki. Taiwan was the first colony of Japan and remained under its ruling power for the next fifty years before it was returned to China after the Second World War.

In the view of the Japanese government, Taiwan at that time was an island which was isolated, poorly established and in need of development. As Said stated “Almost all colonial schemes begin with an assumption of native backwardness and general inadequacy to be independent, equal, and fit” (Said 1993: 96). Likewise the Japanese government aimed to modernise and transform Taiwan and make the island a ‘model colony’ (Edmondson 2002: 26). The ambition of the Japanese government in establishing the colony was twofold: the first was to support Japan economically and the second, more importantly, was to demonstrate to western countries that the Japanese Empire was perfectly capable of governing a colony as effectively (Brown 2004: 53).

Peattie argues that Japanese colonialism was unique. The distinctiveness was created by regional dimensions into which the Japanese empire had expanded. Japan’s close proximity to its colonial subjects was in contrast to the Europeans who tended to set their colonial rule on distant lands. The regional character of Japan’s colonialism meant the coloniser and its subjects were racially akin and shared common cultural heritage. The sense of racial and cultural affinity between coloniser and colonised profoundly shaped Japan’s attitudes toward colonial governance during its early colonial expansion (Peattie 1984: 7). When the Japanese first acquired Taiwan, the new ruler found the island was in settings comparable to its own history before the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Japan underwent the process of modernisation and industrialisation during the period of the Meiji Restoration (1868–1912), which led to vast

social and political reconstructions. Such experience of reforms in the homeland was adopted by Japanese rulers and applied to Taiwan (Peattie 1984: 23).

As the first colony, much effort was paid by the Japanese to establishing the new territory. The early phases of reconstruction focused on material modernity. Between 1895 and 1930, the island underwent a number of major infrastructural developments, which included completing the first railway which had been started in the late nineteenth century by the Chinese; the Japanese also constructed bridges and roads island-wide, built power plants and hospitals, and set up banks and postal services (Lamley 2007: 209; Brown 2004: 53–56).

Although the island of Taiwan developed rapidly under Japanese rule, the Japanese authorities did not achieve control of it effortlessly. The early phase of colonisation began with a number of armed resistances from the Taiwanese populace (Lamley 2007: 207–8); consequently, a militaristic approach to rule was employed that was intended to suppress any uprisings. Fighting between the Japanese and Taiwanese was intense and lasted for several years. It is estimated that by 1900 more than ten thousand Taiwanese had died from combating the new ruling authority (Brown 2004: 16). It was only around 1915 that confrontations with the Japanese government ceased. Nevertheless, the Japanese continued their project of empire building. It was the intention of the colonial government to incorporate Taiwan into the Japanese nation completely, both culturally and linguistically; the end goal being the transformation of the island into an extension of Japan. To attain this, the Japanese replaced the former military rule approach with civilian rule, with the aim of assimilation.

In 1919, more than two decades after the island was first occupied/acquired by the Japanese Empire, a policy named ‘Doka’ (同化) which literally means “assimilation” was pronounced and pursued in Taiwan (Lamley 2007: 221). The Japanese adopted European models of nation building from the nineteenth century that involved formal schooling and a standardised national language (Haylen 2004: 5). The colonial government introduced

compulsory education and the national language of Japan (*Kokugo*) to Taiwanese society. The Japanese authorities envisaged the usage and learning of the national language through schooling. Although primary compulsory education only came into force in 1943, two years before the end of colonisation on Taiwan, school attendance was already high prior to that date due to the encouragement of schooling by the colonial government. During that time, the two dialects of Hoklo and Hakka were most commonly spoken. The former, in particular, was the most widely spoken language, as ethnic Hoklo comprised the majority of the Taiwanese population at the time. The implantation of Japanese as the national language of Taiwan brought with it the obligation on schoolchildren to learn Japanese; it was the first time therefore, in the history of Taiwanese society, that a common language was shared between different ethnic groups.

The final phase of Japanese occupation on Taiwan began with the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 when Japan invaded China. The island during the period of war was ruled with intense militarism (Moskowitz 2010: 33), with the official and forceful implementation of ‘Kominka’ – Japanization or imperial subjectification (皇民化) – which emphasised Japanese identity (Liao 2006: 15). The aim was the removal of the Chinese identity of the Taiwanese and the transformation of the island into a loyal subject of the Japanese Empire. Devotion towards the Japanese emperor was stressed and encouraged, and during the course of Kominka, culture and languages that originated from China were banned.

Japan’s colonisation on the island of Taiwan ended along with the Second World War in 1945 since the island was ceded to China immediately after the war. Taiwan then came under the rule of the Chinese Nationalists who fled China following their defeat by the Chinese Communists.

### **1.2b Cultural and Language Policies during the Period of Japanese Colonisation**

During the Japanese occupation, Taiwan underwent a series of social and cultural reforms. As mentioned above, it was the colonial ruler's aim that Taiwan should be assimilated with Japan completely and the island should be viewed as an extension of the homeland. Implanting the national language into the colonised island and introducing compulsory primary education were seen as the most fundamental colonial strategies by Japan.

According to Wei (2006), language policies that were imposed in Taiwan during Japanese rule consisted of three stages: pacification, assimilation and wholesale Japanisation. Preceding the commencement of the Japanisation Movement in 1937, Hoklo and other languages that existed on the island before occupation continued to be spoken. However, the use of the Japanese language was encouraged and rewarded. The three stages of language assimilation coincided with Japan's attitude towards the traditional culture of colonised Taiwan. As opposed to the Chinese Nationalist government's rule, which would assume power in Taiwan later in 1949, the Japanese government showed a forbearance of Taiwanese culture for most of its colonial rule on the island. Both Chinese and indigenous customs and cultural activities were allowed (Chang 1997: 113) even during the years of enforcement of the Japanese assimilation policy.

During the early 1920s, Taiwanese *gezaixi* was invented in Yilan, the north-eastern part of the island (Zhang 1997: 76–77). Unlike the Chinese cultural traditions that were introduced to the island by its immigrants from China, the opera-like *gezaixi* could be considered as one of the most authentic art forms of Taiwan. Taiwanese *gezaixi* was not developed by the ruling class or social elites, but by farmers and labourers who learned and performed a range of folk songs popular in the southern part of the Fujian Province in China (Chang 1997: 113) in their spare time. Folk songs from China were altered and modified into short musical sketches and later developed into *gezaixi* opera form. Initially, *gezaixi* was performed outdoors for the

purpose of ritual functions, but by the mid-1920s, *gezaixi* began to attract commercial interest and its performances became available in theatres. Taiwanese *gezaixi* was performed in colloquial Hoklo and the presentation of the drama, which included dances, music, and dialogue, were appreciated and favoured by the general public (Chang 1997: 113). It was one of the most common entertainments in Taiwanese society during Japanese occupation.

Taiwanese society was transformed and reshaped under Japanese colonial rule. The economy of Taiwan developed rapidly, resulting in many Taiwanese enjoying prosperity. This new wealth permitted access to modern inventions and entertainments, such as listening to music on gramophones and watching films (Tian 2008: 39). The first film was introduced to the Taiwanese public by Toyojiro Takamatsu, a Japanese director, and dates back to 1901. Although Taiwan did not make its own films until 1921, films from around the world were shown on the island. Among them were the French film *Judex* (dir. Louis Feuillade 1916) and films from Shanghai, the centre of the Chinese film industry, such as *The Revival of an Old Well* (dir. Dan Duyu 1923). As Taiwan was under the colonial power of Japan at the time, the Japanese government dominated the industry, and the majority of films available in Taiwan, were provided by the Japanese. Resources from the west were first imported into Japan and then distributed to Taiwan, resulting in the adoption of the style and customs of Japanese cinema by the Taiwanese film industry (Chen 1998:47).

The film industry around the world in the early twentieth century was still in the era of silent film. The Japanese developed a system termed *benshi*, using a narrator to interpret the film. The use of *benshi* was later adopted and renamed as *bianshi*<sup>9</sup> (辯士) by the Taiwanese. Taiwanese *bianshi* were considered intellectuals; many of them were educated and fluent in both Japanese and Taiwanese. Two of the most famous *bianshi* at the time were Zhan Tian-ma

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<sup>9</sup> A *bianshi* in early Taiwanese cinema would both narrate the tale and impersonate the voices of characters in the film (Davids and Yeh 2005: 71), particularly the Japanese films into Taiwanese languages.

(詹天馬) and Wang Yunfeng (王雲峰); both were also known for being musicians and composers. Zhan and Wang composed the title song for a Chinese film *The Peach Blossom Weeps Blood* (Taohua qixieji) in the early 1930s marking the birth of Taiwanese popular music.

Compared with the film industry in Taiwan, the introduction of modern music arrived nearly three decades later. Although radio networks were established in Taipei in 1926, the first radio broadcast appeared only two years later in 1928; and it took approximately another two decades for the networks to be extended to other major Taiwanese cities. By 1944, the radio signal covered almost the whole of the island (Lu 1998: 167–168; Wang 2008: 730). In total there were six broadcasting stations, all of which were under the control of the Taiwan Radio Broadcasting Committee (台灣放送協會). The radio programmes broadcasting in the late 1920s and early 1930s were mainly produced locally in Taiwan and dealt with subjects as diverse as news, education and entertainment (Lu 2003: 306–7). Radio news reports would be read in both Japanese and Hoklo, and the majority of the Taiwanese population. The entertainment programmes offered its audiences various types of music, including western, Japanese and traditional Taiwanese music (Guy 2009: 223; Lu 2003: 307). At the time a small fee was payable monthly to listen to the radio (Taiwan Archive 1994), and to attract more Taiwanese audiences, Taiwanese folk songs such as Hakka mountain songs and tea-picking songs were frequently broadcasted. *Beiguan* and *nanguan* music that had been passed down through generations was also included. Moreover, traditional Taiwanese drama *gezaixi*, and the puppet theatre *budaixi*, the most common art forms in Taiwanese society normally performed during religious festivals or the other important public events, also formed part of the radio broadcasting schedule.

In the same year as the start of radio broadcasting in 1928, a Japanese gramophone record

company, Nippon Columbia,<sup>10</sup> launched its branch office in Taipei and appointed a Japanese man Shojiro Kashiwano (柏野政次郎) as the chairman of the company (Chen 1997: 124; Hsu 2000: 271). In the initial stages of the formation of the company, Kashiwano focused on importing Japanese pop music and producing Taiwanese traditional music and folksongs that targeted the largest ethnic group, the Hoklo. At the time however, Nippon Columbia did not offer its consumers any new types of entertainment. The majority of the records were traditional song melodies that were reproduced and remarketed with new lyrics. Newly composed music by local Taiwanese musical artists was rare, and the record sales were poor. This is clear from an article in the *Archive of Taiwan Province* (台灣省通誌) of 1970s which stated that:

Music that Kashiwano's company produced was not in favour within Taiwanese society. The musicians reused melody from songs that were previously well-liked by Taiwanese along with newly written lyrics in an attempt to give the old music a new life. However, this failed because the words adopted in the songs were usually too difficult to comprehend. (Wang 1972: 123–125) (My translation)

Following the industrialisation and economic development of the early twentieth century and the rise of new urban populations in Taiwan, the musical tastes of society gradually changed; and a new type of music aimed at city-dwelling consumers was required. The turning point for Columbia was when the company recorded and released its first single, 'The Peach Blossom Weeps Blood' (桃花泣血記 Taohua qixieji) in 1932 (Chen and Lu: 1996), a popular Taiwanese song directly associated with the Taiwanese film industry. Around the same time, a Shanghai film with the same name as the song was shown in Taiwanese cinemas. The film described a sad love story between a son from a rich family and a poor shepherdess. The families of the young couple opposed the relationship and love between them because of the

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<sup>10</sup> The record label Columbia was first established in Japan in 1910 as Nipponophone Co. The company later adopted the Columbia brand name from US Columbia in 1930 when these two labels were in partnership (Wang 2008: 177; Columbia Official Website: no date)

large gap and differences between their family backgrounds (Zhuang 1999: 92).

To boost publicity for the film, the Chinese film company, Lianhua Productions adopted a different marketing approach. The producers of the film engaged two Taiwanese film *bianshi*, Zhan Tian-ma and Wang Yun-fong to compose a song bearing the same name as the movie in an attempt to attract more Taiwanese viewers. This song was sung in Hoklo by Chun-chun who was one of the most popular *gezaixi* actresses during the period. The lyrics of the song were printed on leaflets and distributed to the public. The song quickly attained popularity and achieved success in record sales.

The successful move of releasing the recording of ‘The Peach Blossom Weeps Blood’ inspired Columbia Records to recruit more local Taiwanese songwriters and lyricists to produce Hoklo song. Among them were Li Lingqio and Deng Yu-xian who later composed several well-known songs such as ‘Longing for the Spring Breeze’ <sup>11</sup>(望春風) (CD website link track 1)<sup>12</sup> in 1933 and ‘A Flower in the Rainy Night’ (雨夜花) in 1934. Both songs are still popular in Taiwan nearly eighty years since their initial release.

Columbia Records produced a remarkable number of song albums during the Japanese colonial period; more than 3500 records were released in less than a decade (Moskowitz 2010: 30). In 1935, Victor Company of Japan,<sup>13</sup> a Japanese record company, which later also became the main competitor of Columbia, set up branches in Taiwan and was followed by several local Taiwanese companies. All the major and small music businesses recognised the opportunities in the market resulting in different varieties of music albums being produced, including both Hoklo and Mandarin pop songs (Moskowitz 2010: 31). However, it is well-known that in the

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<sup>11</sup> Teng, Teresa. 1990. *Teresa Teng's Hokkien Songs*. CD. LFCD 2004. Kuala Lumpa: Life Record.

<sup>12</sup> f3lixlee. 2012. 鄧麗君 (Teresa Teng) - 望春風 (Ban Choon Hong-Hokkien) [Deng Lijun. ‘Longing for the Spring Breeze’]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CpeOMy3-fE> (accessed on 05 June 2015)

<sup>13</sup> The music label Victor Company of Japan is also known as JVC. The company was established in Yokohama, Japan in 1927 as the Japanese supplementary of the U.S. firm, Victor Talking Machine Company. <http://www.jvc.com/company/index.jsp?pageID=2> (accessed on 10 December 2016).



1930s pop music from China was imported and re-worked in Taiwan. As Chinese Mandarin was not widely spoken on the island, it was a common practice of contemporary Taiwanese record companies to take the melodies of Chinese pop songs and replace the lyrics with the Hoklo language.

The Hoklo songs produced in the early 1930s were distinct from traditional Taiwanese music. The influence on popular songs from folk music and other popular genres such as *gezaixi* and *budaixi*, however, could be distinguished. Taiwanese ethnomusicologist Xu Changhui (許常惠) provides clear evidence of this distinction by analysing six of the most well-known popular songs composed in the 1930s, including ‘A Flower in the Rainy Night’, ‘The Peach Blossom Weeps Blood’ and ‘Spring Dream by the Riverside’. The author points out that musical elements such as pentatonic scales, rhymes, seven and five-word verses, and the use of the plain Hoklo language were commonly seen in traditional Taiwanese music and folk songs (Xu 2000: 279–285).

Traditional musical elements were not the only influences on early popular song. Western classical music and the Japanese popular style of *enka* also made a significant impact. While Taiwan was under Japanese rule, education in Western classical music was introduced. Under Japanese colonial rule a number of educational institutions were established. Systematic education in Western musical theory and learning of Western musical instruments were included in Japan’s educational curricula (Moskowitz 2010: 31; Guy 2005: 3). One of the most noticeable features of Hoklo song was the use of Western musical instrumentation usually mixed with traditional Chinese or Japanese instruments (Moskowitz 2010: 32). Furthermore, although pentatonic melodies were commonly employed by Taiwanese pop lyricists, songs were set to western musical harmony and metrical organisation (Guy 2009: 227).

Hoklo songs in the 1930s were also comparable with the contemporary Japanese style *enka* (Guy 2009:226-7) as both shared a number of common musical features. Yano defines

*enka* as “a popular ballad genre that originated in the early twentieth century, which combines western instruments with Japanese scales, rhythms, vocal techniques, and poetic conventions in melodramatic songs of love, loss, and yearning” (Yano 2002: 3). Almost all the Hoklo songs from the same period could trace musical elements of *enka*, particularly the singing style and the presentation of lyrics. Both Japanese *enka* and Taiwanese Hoklo were based on pentatonic scales (Okada 1991: 284) and the use of instrumentation featured a mixture of western and traditional musical instruments (Moskowitz 2010: 32).

Okada points out in her analysis of Japanese *enka* that a melismatic style of singing was an extremely important characteristic of Japanese pop in the 1930s (Okada 1991: 288). Vocal techniques of Hoklo song shared the same distinction. Vibrato singing was common at the end of musical phrases. Furthermore, themes of Hoklo songs were mainly about love, loneliness and hardship of life and the choice of language of the song lyrics from this period were poetic and often mentioned natural phenomena, such as wind, rain, flowers, mountains and rivers (Guy 2009: 223). Such references were suggestive of Japanese *enka*.

Taiwanese songs in the Hoklo language quickly became mainstream in the early 1930s. The growth of the economy in the colonised society assisted in the development of the music business. Moreover, until the late 1930s, the Japanese political and language policies enforced in colonised Taiwan still allowed people to practice their traditional culture and languages despite the progress of Japanese assimilation. This could explain why Hoklo song was extensively popular during most of the Japanese colonisation.

As Japan embarked on the second Sino-Japanese War in China in 1937, the onset of war also marked the initiation of the *Kominka* Movement. *Kominka* literally means ‘Japanised’ (Lu 2003: 142). The project aimed to ensure Taiwanese people remained loyal subjects of the Japanese Empire. A series of new cultural policies were implemented in Taiwanese society, including the use of Japanese as an official language. Contemporary Hoklo song was among

the victims of change at the time. Songs in languages other than Japanese, especially Chinese Mandarin, were banned in 1941 (Lu 2003: 142). Instead, Japanese lyrics were adopted to replace the Hoklo language of Taiwanese songs. In the early 1940s, the Japanese authorities went even further, using Taiwanese popular songs written in the 1930s as propaganda tools. Taking Hoklo songs written by Taiwanese songwriter Deng Yuxian as examples, both Deng's 'Longing for the Spring Breeze' (望春風) of 1933 and 'A Flower in the Rainy Night' (雨夜花) of 1934, both immensely popular at the time, were given new Japanese lyrics and titles and used as patriotic songs by the authorities (Jhuang 2006: 98–99).

Japanese colonisation on the island of Taiwan ended at the close of the Second World War in 1945. The growth of the Taiwanese music industry remained slow during the last phase of Japanese occupation, in particular after 1938 due to the poor economic situation during wartime. Political and social restrictions prevented non-Japanese cultural activities. The number of newly composed Hoklo songs was extremely limited. It was only after the end of the Second World War and before the arrival of the Chinese Nationalists that the Taiwanese public was able to enjoy Hoklo song again.

### **1.3a The Era of the Kuomintang**

During the years of Japanese rule in Taiwan, the Chinese Qing dynasty (1644–1911) ended and the provisional government of the Republic of China was formed in 1912 by the Chinese Nationalist Party (also frequently referred as Kuomintang or KMT). Sun Yat-sen, who was the founder of the Kuomintang, was declared President of the country. Following Sun's death in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek took power and led the Chinese Nationalist Party in China.

Following an agreement made at the Cairo Conference in 1943 (Edmondson 2002: 26), the island of Taiwan, which was colonised by the Japanese for fifty years from 1895, was 'gloriously returned' (光復) (Brown 2004: 9) to the Chinese Nationalist government in 1945

after the end of the Second World War. Taiwan was under a brief administration led by Chen Yi, a Chinese governor, immediately after the post-war period until 1947. Two years later in 1949, Chiang's Nationalist government was defeated by the Chinese Communist Party, in the Chinese civil war that began in 1946, and withdrew to Taiwan (Guy 2005: 14). In December 1949, Chiang set up the Republic of China in Taiwan and declared Taipei the temporary capital of the country. It was also claimed that the Chinese Nationalist Party was the only legitimate government of China; Taiwan was only a temporary base, and eventually it would recover the mainland (Brown 2004: 9).

During the retreat of the Kuomintang in 1949, more than 1.5 million Chinese refugees followed Chiang's move from China to Taiwan. People arriving in Taiwan with the Chinese Nationalists after the Second World War were commonly referred to as Mainlanders (外省人) which translates as 'outside province people' (Guy 2005: 14). The Mainlanders, regardless of their provinces of origin, were seen as outsiders by the Taiwanese. On the other hand, 'native Taiwanese', 'Taiwanese' or '*benshengren* (本省人)' (literally 'this province people') was the term that Hoklo or Hakka people whose ancestors settled in Taiwan before 1945 used to describe themselves. In the early 1950s, the numbers of Mainland immigrants were large, consisting of about 14 per cent of the whole population on the island. The native Taiwanese remained the majority in Taiwan, while the indigenous populations were in the minority comprising only 2 per cent of its residents (Guy 2005: 14).

The Taiwanese initially welcomed the Chinese Nationalist government when the island was first returned to Chinese rule in 1945; nevertheless, the situation soon turned bitter. During Chen Yi's administrative tenure on Taiwan, the economy of the island was increasingly depreciated due to the corruption of, and mismanagement by, the new government. The majority of agricultural assets were damaged and a severe food shortage resulted in high inflation. Not only did Chen's authorities fail to solve economic problems efficiently, but a

political monopoly was also developed preventing any opportunities for native-born Taiwanese to participate (Lee: 2004).

A large number of Taiwanese were forced out of public sector jobs (Edmondson 2002: 26). In addition, communication difficulties and misunderstandings between the two different ethnic groups were caused by a large cultural gap which had formed as a result of fifty years of Japanese colonisation (Guy 2002: 100). Moreover, as the new official language of Mandarin Chinese was not disseminated amongst Taiwanese society, various conflicts between the latter and the Mainlanders emerged (Chang 1997: 116).

Tensions led to a Taiwanese uprising which became known as the 228 Incident (二二八事件) as it started on the 28 February 1947. The uprising was brutally suppressed by the Chinese Nationalist government, and within a few weeks, thousands of Taiwanese were executed and many more were sent to prisons (Guy 2002: 100; Brown 2004: 9). The Nationalist government (KMT) declared martial law on Taiwan in 1948, shortly after the 228 Incident since the island had entered a 'state of emergency' (Guy 2005: 75).

The imposition of martial law remained in effect in Taiwan for nearly half a century from 1947 until 1987. This period of martial law was known as the era of "white terror" (白色恐怖) (Roy 2003: 76–77). During these four decades, Taiwanese people did not enjoy full freedom, as gathering, protesting and publishing material against the government were not permitted. Additionally, an estimated 90,000 people were arrested of whom most were native-born political and academic elites, and at least half that number were executed during the era of white terror on the grounds that they were considered leftists. Lee Wang-tai (李旺臺) who is the then-director of the Memorial Foundation of the 228 Incident<sup>14</sup> described his friend's

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<sup>14</sup> The Memorial foundation of the 228 Incident was founded in Taipei in 1995 after the former president Lee Teng-huei passed the Compensation and Rehabilitation Act into law for the 228 Incident on 07 April 1995. The 228 Memorial Foundation was established to deal with compensation and rehabilitation matters for the victims of the incident.

situation in an interview with *Taipei Times* in 2003: “He was put behind bars for two years simply because he was singing Japanese songs and wearing Japanese clogs” (Ku 2003).

During the period of Martial Law, the Kuomintang employed coercion in their attempts to retain control of the island, a system that the French sociologist, Bourdieu, termed “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu 1970). In Bourdieu’s sociological studies (1970; 1996), he examined how power relations within a society were maintained other than by physical suppression. Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic violence, broadly speaking, is defined as a soft and invisible form of violence that is used by a dominant group to legitimise its power. The characteristics of this symbolic violence were described by Bourdieu as:

...the coercion which is set up only through the consent that the dominated cannot fail to give the dominator...when their understanding of the situation and relation can only use instruments of knowledge that they have in common with the dominator, which, being merely an incorporated form of the structure of the relation of domination, make this relationship appear as natural. (Bourdieu, 2000: 170)

Developing a Chinese national consciousness (中國國家意識), or Sinicisation, was viewed by the authorities as an essential step to maintain its minority rule and domination of the island, as the Mainlanders comprised only about 14 per cent of Taiwan’s population (Guy 1999: 515). One other main reason for incorporating Chinese national consciousness into the society was also to integrate both the ethnic groups, the Mainlanders and the Taiwanese, together in a harmonious society.

The Nationalist government injected Chinese national consciousness into the Taiwanese population by exercising state-sanctioned coercion through the influence of culture. The government exerted an insidious and pervasive influence over the societal habitus through state control of the media and the national language used. Since the Nationalist government established itself in Taiwan, it was believed that the island was only a temporary headquarters,

and that one day, they would return to their homeland, China. Thus, recovery of the Chinese mainland became the Nationalist government's chief objective and dominant ideology (Guy 1999: 511). Promoting Chinese national consciousness amongst Taiwanese society also helped to maintain Chinese Mainlanders' desire to return home (Guy 2005: 77), with the aim that not only would the Mainlanders and their offspring remember their roots in China, but also that the Taiwanese would recognize themselves as Chinese.

One of the first steps toward this ideology would be to legitimise the state of Taiwan as part of "The Republic of China" (Chang 1997: 116). For these reasons the Nationalist government immediately imposed policies to integrate Taiwan within a Chinese identity. The attempt to create a Chinese identity and consciousness was most evident in cultural and language policies. The authorities took over and controlled media broadcasting including television, radio and press. In addition, Chinese Mandarin was actively promoted as the national language on the island. The Chinese Mandarin that was based on the Beijing dialect was selected as China's common language in the early twentieth century and was promoted through the National Language Movement that was launched in Mainland China in the 1911. However, Taiwan did not take part in the national language movement since it was a Japanese colony at the time (Tse 1986: 25).

During the period of the Japanese occupation, Japanese was the official language of Taiwan and therefore Chinese Mandarin was only spoken by a very small number of Taiwanese. It was initially introduced to the island upon the arrival of the Mainlanders in the mid-1940s. The introduction of Chinese Mandarin to Taiwan and the resulting ban imposed on Japanese language and culture were seen by the Nationalist government at that time as an important move not only for the purpose of de-Japanisation (去日本化) in Taiwanese society, but also to implant the political power of the Nationalist government to the island and move a step further towards its main goal of Sinicisation (Chen 2008; Huang: 2007; Tsao 1999). This was evident

from Bai Chongxi's (白崇禧) (one of the officials of Taiwan appointed by the Nationalist government following Japan's return of the island in 1945) political manifesto that appeared in the *Taiwan Shin Sheng Daily News* (台灣新生報) in 1947. Bai stated:

The reason why we need to learn our national language (Chinese Mandarin)... the most important reason, is to eradicate the humiliation of using the Japanese language that was forced upon us through Japanese colonisation and bring upon the restoration of the history and glory of our Chinese nation (*Taiwan Shin Sheng Daily News*, 28 March 1947; my translation)

The Nationalist government showed a strong determination to develop Chinese Mandarin as the national language of Taiwan. The Committee for the Propagation and Promotion of the National Language (CPPNL) (國語推行委員會) (renamed the National Language Committee in 2000) was officially established in Taiwan on 2 April 1946 by the Chinese governor, Chen Yi. The CPPNL aimed to standardise and disseminate Chinese Mandarin to Taiwanese society (Huang 2007: 41–64, Tsao 1999, Yeh, Chan and Cheng 2004: 76) and Chinese then became compulsory in schools and other public sectors by 1964 under the cultural policy made by the authorities (Yeh, Chan and Cheng 2004: 76)

The French scholar, Stephane Corcuff, has studied the ways in which the Nationalist government attempted to construct a Chinese national identity on the island of Taiwan during their rule from 1945 (Corcuff 2002: 83–92). Corcuff points out that education had the most influential psychological impact on the people, and was one of the most powerful means for the Nationalists for the implementation of their political ideology. Corcuff cites the nineteenth century French historian Jules Michelet who believed, "...‘the first part of politics was education’..." (Corcuff 2002: 84), and applies it to the case of Taiwan. He explains that through education, the Nationalist government successfully achieved its political goal and simultaneously helped to develop a sense of democracy amongst the population and avoid



major political attacks or unrest. Roberta Martin has analysed primary school textbooks in both China and Taiwan in the 1970s and stresses the importance of school textbooks when implanting political ideology. She writes:

Textbooks...are one medium extremely susceptible to centralized political control and to the uniformity of message, particularly when they are published by government printing houses and circulate through many if not all of the nation's schools... (Martin 1975: 243)

For the purpose of incorporating Chinese national consciousness into Taiwanese society, subjects such as Chinese history, classical literature, and geography became compulsory in school and college curricula. Schoolchildren were taught to revere Confucian ethics and to be proud of their Chinese heritage. In addition, the Nationalist government encouraged other Chinese cultural activities such as sponsoring Chinese painting exhibitions and organising traditional orchestras. This is evident in Guy's study (2005), which analyses the development of Peking opera. Peking opera originated in China and was promoted and labelled the National Opera of Taiwan during the martial law period. While the Communists launched the Cultural Revolution in China in the 1960s, with the ensuing widespread attacks on traditional Chinese culture, the Nationalist government in Taiwan in contrast had transformed the island into a centre that preserved Chinese cultural heritage (Chang 1997: 116; Hsiao 1997: 312).

The Chinese national consciousness that the KMT government sought to develop cannot be separated from anti-Communism. Over the Kuomintang period the political ideology was implemented in various spheres, particularly in education. In addition to delivering political messages through school textbooks, it was common practice for primary school students to chant anti-Communist slogans in the classrooms and to attend singing competitions of patriotic songs in schools. Moreover, Taiwanese people were encouraged to take part in cultural accomplishments that aligned with the government's political ideology. For example, an

officially supported private commission named the Chinese Arts Founding Committee (中華文藝獎金委員會) was founded in 1950, which together with the Ministry of Education, provided various prizes for Chinese literature and music compositions.

Prizes were given to students, artists, writers or musicians who produced patriotic or anti-Communist works. Prize-winning songs were distributed to all levels of schools and colleges as teaching materials. One of the most famous children's songs in Taiwan was called 'When I Grow Up' (只要我長大). The song contained four verses and was about a boy who praised people who went to war and fought with the Communists for the country. The last phrase of the song described the boy's wish that he would protect his country by joining the army and killing enemies (communists) when he grew up. 'When I Grow Up' was composed in 1950 by Bai Jin-shang and won the prize awarded by the Chinese Arts Founding Committee. The song is still today one of the most well-known in Taiwanese society.

Chinese culture was widely promoted by the Chinese Nationalist government since the late 1940s. Taiwanese traditional culture, on the other hand, was de-emphasised and discouraged following the arrival of the Nationalist government, and political Taiwanese localism was severely suppressed. Under the One China ideology, the authorities effectively labelled local Taiwanese culture and languages obscene or backward (Chang 1997: 116). The major thrust was the use of language. For instance, Hakka, the language that was spoken by the ethnic group of Hakka was categorised as a backward dialect in part because it lacked a writing system (Hsiao 2000: 135). For this reason, local Taiwanese dialects inherently carried the implication of illegitimacy and illiteracy. Under the Nationalist government's rule, public education was exclusively in the language of Mandarin, and students who used Taiyu (the

languages of Taiwan, 台語),<sup>15</sup> including indigenous tongues and Hoklo would risk disciplinary action by their teachers.

Martial law, which was imposed following the Taiwanese uprising (the 228 Incident in 1947), was only lifted forty years later in 1987. During the four decades of the Nationalist government's rule, the concept of Chinese national consciousness was injected into society through various means, and the island of Taiwan was portrayed by the authorities as a region of China both nationally and internationally. However, following the end of Martial law in the late 1980s, the history of Taiwan had turned a new page and the island entered a new democratic era.

### **1.3b Popular Music Under the Rule of the Kuomintang**

Since its birth in the early 1930s, Hoklo popular music was well received in Taiwanese society. Recordings of Hoklo songs reached the mainstream and were sold widely during the period of Japanese colonisation. Following the eruption of the Second World War, popular songs sung in languages other than in Japanese were restricted by the colonial government. A number of Hoklo songs were given Japanese lyrics and served propaganda purposes. When Taiwan was ceded by Japan to China as part of the Shimonoseki Treaty at the end of the Second World War in 1945, Hoklo songs re-emerged in post-war Taiwanese society (Moskowitz 2010: 33).

From 1945 to 1949, Hoklo songs released before the war were, once again, enjoyed by

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<sup>15</sup> The language of Taiyu (台語) is also known by many other terms such as Taiwan-hua (台灣話), both literally meaning the language of Taiwan. The term Taiyu was first mentioned in 1946 by a Taiwanese university lecturer Wu Sholi who used the term to refer to dialects spoken in Taiwan in the post-war period including aboriginal tongues, Hoklo, Hakka and other local dialects (Huang 2007: 42). However, at present, as the language of Hoklo is spoken by the largest ethnic group the Hoklo (河洛) comprising about 73 per cent of the whole Taiwanese population (Huang 1993: 21) in modern Taiwan, the term 'Taiyu' normally refers to the language of Hoklo. The Hoklo people began to arrive and settle in Taiwan from Fujian province in Southern China in late seventeenth century, and the language of Minnan-hua, which was one of the major regional dialects of Fujian, was brought into the island by the immigrants (Scott and Tiun 2007: 54). Taiyu in modern Taiwanese society does not entirely retain its original form; it has borrowed from and been influenced by other languages, mainly Mandarin and Japanese.

the Taiwanese population. In addition, several new songs were written by local Taiwanese composers in Hoklo and were broadcast through radio, as the music industry and record companies did not recover immediately (Jian 1997: 126). The musical style of Hoklo song, which was fashionable in Taiwanese society from the early 1930s, was greatly influenced by Japanese *enka*, the songwriters of post-war Taiyu pop, nevertheless, maintained the musical manners and the singing styles of the old Hoklo song for their new compositions.

However, the themes of the Taiyu song lyrics in the post-war period went in a different direction, which focused on contemporary Taiwanese society. Among the most popular was a song named 'Returning Home Soon' (望你早歸) composed in 1946 by Yang Sanlang (楊三郎). The song described a woman longing for her husband's return. During the Second World War, a large number of Taiwanese men were sent to the frontline to fight for Japan with many not returning home. Yang's 'Returning Home Soon' touched many Taiwanese women's hearts and the tune became one of the most well-known songs of the period.

When Taiwan was returned to Chinese rule in 1945 and came under the management of Chen Yi, the economy of the island was increasingly struggling due to venalities and maladministration by the new authorities. The hardship experienced by ordinary Taiwanese people was reflected in many Taiyu songs. Two examples were 'Hot Dumpling' (燒肉粽) and 'Collecting Wine Bottles' (收酒罈); both songs were composed by Zhangqiu Dongsong (張邱東松) in 1948 and 1949 respectively. Zhang's songs told stories of two Taiwanese youths who although unemployed since leaving school, had to work hard to earn a living despite the harsh financial and social conditions. In addition, as many young people were forced to leave rural areas and their parents to search for employment in the capital city of Taipei, songs that were reminiscent of hometowns and loved ones, especially mothers, were also typical. Compared with the old Hoklo songs of the 1930s, words that songwriters adopted for the lyrics in the post-war period tended to be bitter and sorrowful.

Since the first commercial pop song was released in Taiwan in the early 1930s, Hoklo/Taiyu pop dominated the music industry on the island. However, following the introduction of Chinese popular music, *shidaiqu* (時代曲) to Taiwan in the late 1940s, Taiyu pop was no longer a monopoly in the market. Chinese pop gradually developed into the mainstream by the 1970s. The style of Chinese *shidaiqu* later became the foundation of modern Hong Kong pop and Taiwanese pop (also known as *gangtai* (港台) music or Mandopop; Moskowitz 2010: 1), which remains one of the most well-received cultural products of Taiwan in Chinese speaking communities and societies in China and Singapore.

Chinese popular music that was brought to Taiwan in the late 1940s and early 1950s originally began in the late 1920s in Shanghai with a musical genre named *shidaiqu* (時代曲), which can be translated into the English language as ‘modern songs’ (Jones 2001: 6) or ‘songs of the era’. *Shidaiqu* was founded by a Chinese musician called Li Jinhui (黎錦輝) whose modern songs were a type of fusion song sung in Mandarin and influenced by Western Jazz from American musicians such as Buck Clayton who performed in China in the 1930s (Jones 2001: 6). The manner of Li’s popular music was lyrical and emotional. From 1920 to 1940s, the tender, slow, sweet melodies of Chinese popular music with their romantic lyrics gained considerable popularity in cosmopolitan cities in China, particularly in Shanghai in the context of the new modern, urban leisure culture of nightclubs and upscale dance halls (Baranovitch 2003: 11).

The 1930s and 1940s could be considered the golden age of the modern and stylish *shidaiqu*. The number of modern songs grew explosively with productions reaching almost every corner of Shanghai. The songs were promoted and vended via various media including radio, studio-recorded records, magazines and films, in addition to live performances at nightclubs and dancehalls. Chinese *shidaiqu* were performed by young female singers, supported by male musicians (Jones 2001: 96). A number of singers later also became well-

known actresses as many of them developed careers in the film industry. Zhou Xuan was one of the most renowned performers at the time. Zhou gained her fame as a singer and was given the nickname Golden Voice (金嗓子) (Jones 2001: 71; Steen 2000: 126–128) and The Singing Queen of the Generation (一代歌后) (Hong 2008:2). A total of two hundred and forty-two songs were written for and sung by Zhou Xuan, and songs such as ‘When Will the Gentleman Come Back Again?’ (何日君再來) (1937) and ‘The Sing Song Girl’ (天涯歌女) (1937) were among the most famous and are still sung today. Despite her success as a singer, Zhou Xuan was also became a popular actress making appearances in 44 films during her performing career of the 1930s and 1940s.

Chinese modern song ruled the music and entertainment industries in China for nearly three decades especially in the 1930s until the late 1940s. However, despite the increasing popularity of *shidaiqu* in urban society, it was not valued politically. Popular music was labelled by the then ruling Chinese Nationalist government (Kuomintang, KMT) as Sounds of Decadence (糜糜之音) and Yellow Music (黃色音樂), symbolising pornography<sup>16</sup> (Jones. 2001: 8–10) in the Chinese language. It was believed by the authorities that Yellow Music at the time was capable of perverting the development of the country. The Nationalists therefore made attempts to ban popular music, in particular, the songs of Li Jinhui for their “decadence” and “vulgarity” (Jones 2001: 74). Furthermore, in the 1930s after Japan invaded Manchuria, popular music was seen by the leftists as a distraction and condemned for softening people’s morale (Baranovitch 2003: 1–4) and leading them away from anti-imperialist resistance (Jones 2001: 8).

This soft and romantic popular music was banned and almost vanished from China after the Chinese Communist party established the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Popular

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<sup>16</sup> There were no pornographic content in popular music. The term Yellow Music implied that popular music was as bad and sinful as pornography.

songs that were associated with “decadent” bourgeois individualism (Baranovitch 2003: 11) were replaced by new songs and operas with revolutionary themes under Communist rule. While popular music was forbidden in China after the immediate post-war period, it survived in both Hong Kong and Taiwan.

During the mid-1950s and 1960s, a number of newly composed Taiyu songs were significantly reduced due to the enforcement of the language policies in Taiwanese society. The compositions by the songwriters, Hong Yifeng (洪一峰), such as ‘The Moonlight of Daishui’ (淡水暮色) (1957) were among the few that were available. To minimise effort and reduce costs, it was common practice for music companies at the time, such as Asia Records (亞洲唱片), to take Japanese melodies and reproduce them with Taiyu texts. The hybrid songs offered an inexpensive and quick solution for the Taiyu pop market, which was rapidly falling into decline (Jian 1997: 129).

Taiyu pop during the Kuomintang rule was not supported by the authorities. In the 1970s, the authorities went a step further and passed regulation to restrict the Hoklo language from use in popular songs (Tsai 2002: 22). Moreover, a number of restrictions on electronic media broadcasting were imposed in the early 1980s in order to limit the dissemination of the dialects (including Hoklo, Hakka and other aboriginal tongues). For popular music, the Government Information Office allowed only the daily television performance of songs in two dialects.

Taiyu popular music was suppressed and strictly controlled by the Kuomintang before martial law was lifted in 1987. Mandarin pop songs, on the other hand, received less government regulation and limitation. Following the establishment of commercial television in Taiwan in the early 1960s, Mandarin pop music circulated rapidly via the new medium. Although until the 1970s only 20 per cent of the households owned a television set, the power of the small screen was still undoubtedly influential.

In 1962, Taiwan Television (台灣電視公司), the first TV station in Taiwan, launched a

singing programme called *The Gathering of Pop Stars* (群星會), which provided opportunities for pop singers to perform on the state media level. The programme ran for more than a decade before it was put to an end in 1977. The nature of *The Gathering of Pop Stars* was comparable to *Top of the Pops* in Britain (which had been running for over four decades from 1964 on BBC television in the UK). Both *The Gathering of Pop Stars* and *Top of the Pops* featured a large number of pop singers many of whom performed in the shows to promote their music.

*The Gathering of Pop Stars* was broadcast twice a week when it was first showed in the early 1960s. The content of the programme focused solely on Mandarin pop songs. As it was a national television show, the visual presentation of the singers and performers was carefully organised. The images of the Mandarin singers – both women and men – were portrayed to be elegant with a high class image. *The Gathering of Pop Stars* proved extremely popular and unquestionably stimulated the growth of Chinese pop music.

In the 1960s and 1970s, more and more Mandarin pop songs were available in the market. Songs like ‘Unforgettable Memories’ (意難忘) (1963) by Meidai (美黛), ‘The Moon Represents My Heart’ (月亮代表我的心) (1977) and ‘Stories of the Little Town’ (小城故事)(1977) by Deng Lijun (鄧麗君), who is also known as Teresa Teng, were among the most famous at the time. Meidai’s ‘Unforgettable Memories’ was recorded in 1963 and became a tremendous success. It was believed to be the first Mandarin song that had outsold Taiyu songs in Taiwanese pop music history. The singer Deng Lijun who sung both ‘The Moon Represents My Heart’ and ‘Stories of the Little Town’ was known for her sweet and soft voice. The Taiwanese born singer was the second generation of a Chinese Mainlander military family with both parents from China. Deng had developed her singing career since she was ten years old and was invited to perform on the nationwide singing programme, *The Gathering of Pop Stars*, at the age of fifteen in 1968. During Deng Lijun’s singing career, she had close relationship with Taiwanese politics. As a daughter of military personnel, she was openly anti-Communist



(Zhou 2009: 145). Deng frequently performed for the Taiwanese army and was portrayed by the media as a 'patriotic singer' (愛國藝人) (Hsu 2006: 255).

Deng Lijun passed away in 1995 from an asthma attack at the relatively young age of forty-two. During almost three decades of her singing career, Deng released more than one hundred singles and albums. Most of her records were lyrical romantic love songs. The singer was not only well-known in Taiwan; the popularity of Deng expanded from the island to Hong Kong, Japan and South East Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand from the early 1970s.

The ballads of Deng Lijun were typical of the Taiwanese pop music industry in the 1960s and 1970s. Songwriters during this period adopted Western pop of the time as a framework for the Mandarin songs in Taiwan (Moskowitz 2010: 34; 44–47). Western musical harmony and instruments, such as piano, flute and violin were used to accompany the expressive melodies. Deng's songs can be said to have inherited the *shidaiqu* style that was popular in Shanghai during the 1920s and 1930s. Such music was deeply influenced by Western popular music while traditional Chinese pentatonicism was still maintained (Baranovitch 2003: 11). Moreover, a Chinese flavour was also created in some of Deng's music through the adoption of traditional Chinese musical instruments such as *dizi* (bamboo flute) and *erhu* (two string fiddle) (Baranovitch 2003: 11).

Since the 1960s the Mandarin language songs experienced rapid growth in the Taiwanese market despite being tightly controlled by the authorities. Popular music (liuxing yinyue 流行音樂) in Chinese culture had never been considered politically valuable since its mass-mediated appearance on the Chinese musical scene in the early twentieth century (Jones 2001: 8). Although Chinese pop in Taiwan was not completely prohibited during the martial law period in comparison to mainland China, the attitude of the Chinese Nationalist government in Taiwan towards popular music remained unchanged. Despite its popularity, Chinese pop was

still seen as low class and cheap music by the government. This was evident from Chiang Kai-Shek's speech presented in 'The First National Conference of Art and Culture' (第一屆全國文藝座談), where he stated, 'It is the responsibility of contemporary artists to revive our culture, which is becoming fast degraded' (Zheng 1994: 35).<sup>17</sup>

Chiang's statement resulted in a series of cultural reforms, including the imposing of cultural campaigns called Purification of Television Content (淨化電視節目) in 1972 and Purification of Popular Music (淨化歌曲) in 1976. The movement of purification of pop songs was strongly advocated by the government. Throughout the process, the primary aim for the authorities was to purify/cleanse people's minds, thus only good music was allowed. Songs with dirty or immoral lyrics or implications were banned; conversely, it was believed by the government that singing more patriotic songs would increase the solidarity of the country. Therefore, it was essential to encourage new composition of patriotic songs which could be taught to the public through education and other means such as media broadcasting.

Central to the progress of purifying popular music, the Government Information Office focused on two main areas: song lyrics and increasing the circulation of patriotic songs. In He's (1992: 34) article 'Radio and Television', it was clearly stated that every popular song, including songs in Mandarin, must be checked by the authorities before being allowed performance or publication (He 1992: 34). The procedure of inspecting lyrics ensured that only appropriate lyrics would be sung. In addition, it was also required by the Government Information Office (行政院新聞局) that entertainment television programmes, such as *The Gathering of Pop Stars* (群星會), must contain at least a third in patriotic songs out of the whole programme (Yang 1998). The programme was directed by political concerns and it existed not only for the purpose of entertainment, but also with an overt political agenda and

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<sup>17</sup> My translation.

government intervention.

The Nationalist government's policy of the purification of popular music was not unique to Taiwan; it was mirrored in mainland China a few years later in 1982 and 1983 when the Chinese authorities implemented campaigns against 'pornography' and "spiritual pollution" (Baranovitch 2003: 15) from abroad. In the late 1979, when Deng Xiaoping came into power, China underwent a series of reforms that marked the beginning of a new era in Chinese history. Under Deng's regime, China introduced an Open Door policy allowing foreign trade and investment which resulted in rapid economic growth. However, Deng's reforms brought opportunities as well as tensions to Chinese society.

When China opened itself to the outside world for economic development, foreign culture and its by-products such as popular music flooded into the country (Baranovitch 2003: 10). Cultural products from abroad were welcomed in China by college students, writers, intellectuals and young urbanites. Nevertheless, the conservative government found foreign culture objectionable as it often involved 'bourgeois liberalism' and was contradictory to the social and cultural values of the Chinese. Thus the authorities responded with periodic campaigns against 'spiritual pollution' (Baranovitch 2003: 15) and 'pornography' (Jones 2001: 6) to protect its citizens against the 'unsuitable' foreign culture (Ebrey 1996: 328) which became gradually permeated in China after the country opened itself to the world.

The campaign against spiritual pollution was launched in China in late 1983 by the director of the Propaganda Department, Deng Liqun, who claimed to have received numerous complaints about the destructive influence on China's youth of popular music, fashion and literature from abroad (Clark 1987: 175). One principal aim of these campaigns was to eliminate the obscene cultural production that occurred in China at the time and it was evident when the State Council issued updated regulations on "Strictly Forbidding Obscene Goods" (Baranovitch 2003: 15) in 1985. The new regulations were comprehensive, and the authorities

believed the importation, reproduction, sale and broadcast of music audiotapes should be dealt with cautiously as it could be a form of pollution (Honig and Hershatter 1988: 62; Baranovitch 2003: 15).

*Gangtai* music (港台音樂) was the earliest foreign popular music to penetrate into China following the Open Door policy. *Gangtai* was a term derived from the Chinese names of Hong Kong and Taiwan, and popular music from these two places was known as *gangtai* music. Among other forms of cultural productions, *gangtai* songs were one of the main areas to be targeted during the Anti Pornography and Spiritual Pollution campaigns in China in the 1980s. With the help of low-cost cassette recording and duplicating technology, *gangtai* music which was previously banned in China, could be easily smuggled into the country. More importantly, the Chinese Communist Party had gradually relaxed its tight control of society at that time.

State-controlled radio was no longer the sole option for Chinese people, and for these two reasons *gangtai* music soon spread to the whole of China (Baranovitch 2003:10–15). However, despite its overwhelming popularity, the Chinese authorities did not appreciate *gangtai* music. The Chinese Communist Party regarded the content of *gangtai* songs to primarily comprise love songs with low class and crude lyrics that did not contribute value to the fast changing society of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Baranovitch notes (2003: 15) that the terminologies such as Sounds of Decadence (糜糜之音) and Yellow Music (黃色音樂), which were adopted by the Nationalist party to describe popular music about half a century ago, continued to be used by the Communist party many years later in China.

Popular music in both Taiwan and China was not recognised as a respectable cultural product but was acknowledged to have a powerful influence on society. In both cases, the ruling party at the time blamed the soft nature of popular music for weakening the development of the country and polluting the heart and soul of the nation. As a result, both countries underwent a series of purification campaigns to introduce measures such as censorship and promotion of

patriotic songs. In addition, the Chinese Nationalist government in Taiwan went a step further focusing on the use of lyrics through limitation of dialect and promotion of Chinese Mandarin. All the ideological control of the KMT over the public sphere in Taiwanese society led the music industry in a new direction: the Movement of Campus Folk Song (see Chapter 2).

Since the 1950s, the popular music industry in Taiwan was strictly controlled by the authorities. Both Mandarin and Taiyu pop were carefully and selectively promoted or suppressed. Popular music during the Kuomintang period was not only for the purpose of entertainment; it was deeply engaged with political concerns. This state of affairs set the scene for the transformation of Taiwan's music industry in the late 1960s and 1970s. Nevertheless, following the lifting of martial law in 1987, the new politics agenda was intended to lead the Taiwanese pop music industry back to the themes of local and root seeking, regarded as essential for the creation of a new Taiwanese identity.

#### **1.4 Their Music on Our Land – American Pop in Taiwan**

Since the 1950s, American pop had been largely embraced by the Taiwanese young elites. Even in the 1970s, when the university students decided to compose their own songs in an attempt to craft a Chinese identity, the musical style of the American folk revival of the late 1950s and early 1960s was still referenced.

The Taiwanese preoccupation with American popular music and popular culture was inseparable from the presence of the American occupation forces. In the mid-1950s, the island of Taiwan formally became one of the garrisons of the US; the American troops brought not only military aid but also the American culture and popular music of the time. In 1954, a radio station named Armed Forces Network Taiwan (AFNT--美軍電台)<sup>18</sup> was established in

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<sup>18</sup> ANFT was renamed International Community Radio Taipei (ICRT) in 1979.

Taiwan's capital, Taipei. The official duties of AFNT were to serve the American forces community in Taiwan and forge a cultural link between the Taiwanese people and the English-speaking residents of the island (ICRT 2015). ANFT broadcast only in English. News and popular music from the US formed the main content. ANFT provided Taiwanese society with easy access to Western culture, which had previously been limited to certain social classes earlier during the Japanese colonial period.

In the mid-to-late 1950s, popular music from America was not only popularised through AFNT, but a number of local Taiwanese radio stations, such as the government-found Police Radio Station (警察廣播電台) and Zhengsheng Broadcasting (正聲廣播電台), also made Western pop songs available to their listeners (Yia 1969: 196). One of the first radio programmes that regularly brought American pop music to Taiwan was called *Remen Yinyue* (熱門音樂), which was hosted by Tao Xiaoqing (陶曉清) in 1965. *Remen Yinyue* can be translated into English as 'hit songs' or 'hot songs', which is how Taiwanese DJs referred to foreign songs at that time.

A more specific definition of the term *Remen Yinyue* was given by Fei Li (費禮), who also hosted radio programmes in the late 1950s and 1960s. In Fei's article, 'Talk about Hit Songs' (談熱門音樂), he explained that *Remen Yinyue* was a type of music that was popular and well-known publically. Fei adopted the term to refer to foreign music, which was mostly from Western countries, especially pop songs from the US that appealed to the young people of Taiwan (Fei 1969). About a decade after *Remen Yinyue* was first broadcast on Taiwanese radio in the mid-1950s, by 1968, there were more than 10 programmes providing their listeners with pop songs from the US (Fang 2008: 32).

In the 1960s, the spread of American popular music in Taiwan was no longer solely reliant on broadcasts by radio stations. The Vietnam War in the 1960s resulted in a surge of

American military camps based on the island. Foreign entertainment sites such as night-clubs and pubs on the island were in large demand among the American population and provided an alternative route for American pop music to permeate Taiwanese society (Yia 1969).

In addition, during the late 1960s and the early 1970s, bootleg cassette technology and industrial level piracy played a large part in promoting American pop music on the island. As the main consumers of American cultural products in Taiwan during that time were high school and university students, a company named Shenying (神鷹) produced a monthly album series called *The Sound of Students* (學生之音) which catered to the tastes of the young educated Taiwanese. *The Sound of Students* albums consisted of a mixture of popular songs from the American pop charts such as Billboard and cover band music, most of which were classified as illegal copyright material (Zhang 2003: 59). *The sound of Students* gained overwhelming popularity among young people, as it was easily affordable.

Since the end of the Second World War, Americanisation and globalisation have been experienced worldwide. The culture and products of the US were exported internationally, and Taiwan was no exception. By the early 1970s, the island was swamped by American brands, such as Coca-Cola and Nike, along with other cultural products, such as Hollywood films, fashion, and pop music. The experience of Americanisation within Taiwanese society was embraced by its people. Yang Ze (楊澤), editor of *Love and Guilt of the 1970s* (七十年代懺情錄) (1994), describes Taiwanese society in the 1970s as follows:

I was born in 1954 and was the second generation born after the Second World War. Anything from the United States was loved by most of people around the world. Merchandise such as Coca-Cola, American-made refrigerators, televisions, cars and Hollywood films offered an indescribable fascination and sense of longing (for the Taiwanese people) (Yang 1994: 6; my translation) .

Among all the US cultural exports, Hollywood films were the most symbolic, disseminating modernity, new ideas, and the modern life of American society worldwide (Bolton and Olsson 2010: 15). The soft power of the media in promoting American popular culture and modernity was highly effective and created an American dream in Taiwanese society (Lin 2009: 376–377).

Hollywood films and US pop music were closely inter-linked. Simon Frith highlights that the rise of the popularity of American music was largely influenced by the export of Hollywood films overseas (Frith 1992: 59). Since the 1960s, American pop music was largely disseminated in Taiwan through Hollywood films. The image of a progressive American society promoted by these films made American pop a symbol of advanced (先進的) and high class music in Taiwan (Fang 2008: 31).

Like Hollywood films, popular music from the US in the 1960s was highly praised in Taiwan. This is evidenced from the statement by Yang Zujun (楊祖珺),<sup>19</sup> a well-known Taiwanese politician of the 1980s, describing how much she enjoyed American culture and pop when she was a university student:

I used to observe the weekly rankings and every other detail of the American pop charts when I was in my late teens to early 20s...I was much more familiar with American culture of the past 200 years than the 5000 years of Chinese history. I was completely Americanised, both my life and my mind. (Yang 1992: 90) (my translation)

In the mid-1960s, the interest in American popular music in Taiwanese society led to the formation of cover bands, and rock bands such as Dianxing (電星) and Shiqi shidai (石器時代) were amongst the best-known bands during this time. A Taiwanese pop magazine,

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<sup>19</sup> I will discuss this singer in detail in chapter 2.



*Yinyue* (音樂), analysed compositions and backgrounds of the cover band members of the mid-1960s, revealing that the majority of them came from the Taiwanese capital, Taipei, and were educated to at least college or university level (He and Zhang 2000: 157). By the early 1970s, E Mama (鵝媽媽), Shuijin (水晶) and many more other bands were emerging in Taiwan's music industry. Most of the cover bands in Taiwan generated an income by performing cover songs in night-clubs, pubs, and restaurants or at US services' bases (Zhang 2003: 59). American pop concerts were also organised and made available commercially. The songs performed by the bands were normally linked to the American pop charts of the day (Tao 1966; quoted in He and Zhang 2000: 158).

During the 1950s and mid-1960s, the folksong revival movement was blossoming in the US popular music industry. The collection of modern American folksongs began in the late 1940s by song collectors like John and Alan Lomax (Lankford 2005: xi) who collected folk songs from American singers and songwriters. However, the style of music did not gain popularity in the US straightaway. The folk boom or folk revival commenced only after the record 'Tom Dooley' by the Kingston Trio sold six million copies in the summer of 1958.

The American folksong revival reached its height in the mid-1960s (Mitchell 2007: 1), spawning a large number of singer-songwriters who accompanied themselves on folk instruments, especially the acoustic guitar and banjo. Since most of the consumers and audiences were middle-class college students, the heat of folk music spread rapidly across university campuses, where various folk music clubs were set up and hootenannies (folk music parties) took place (Lankford 2005: xiii). American folk music reached the mainstream media, national television and magazines, such as *Billboard* and the *New York Times*. The media even covered folksong events including the Newport Folk Festival that took place annually.

The folksong revival in the late 1950s in the US was adopted by commercial singers and songwriters as a mean of expressing support for the American Civil Rights Movement and later the Anti-War movement (against the Vietnam War). Protest songs and topical songs were commonly written by folk music songwriters, including Pete Seeger, Don McLean, Carole King, Joan Baez and Bob Dylan. Even though the American folk song revival was largely associated with political movements and protests, it was, however, the peaceful resistance of the younger generation toward the US government. Unlike the rock 'n' roll of the mid-1950s and rock music of the late 1960s in America, the folk song revival which was embraced by the young educated carried no rebellious or violence implications (Lankford 2005: xv).

Although the folk song revival began in the US from the late 1950s, the movement gained popularity in Taiwan slightly later, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, Taiwanese pop fans were not completely unfamiliar with modern American folk song when it was highly prevalent in the US during the early 1960s. Hong Xiaoqiao (洪小喬), a Taiwanese singer and songwriter, made several attempts to introduce American folksong to pop fans on the island. Nevertheless, Hong failed in this, as the performing and singing style of this modern folksong, solo singing accompanied by an acoustic guitar was considered too light (清清淡淡) by the Taiwanese hit song (熱門音樂) supporters at the time (Zhang 2003: 60).

In the late 1960s, admiration for the American folksong started to sprout in Taiwan. During that time, the music was still classified as hit songs along with all other genres of pop from America and Britain in Taiwan. By the early 1970s, the modern American folksong already dominated the foreign pop market of Taiwan. It was evident from a survey conducted by Zhang (2003: 61) for the local Taiwanese pop music magazine *Yinyue* (音樂) that the majority of popular foreign pop songs in Taiwan in 1971 were from the US. Songs like 'Take Me Home', Country Road by the folk musician, John Denver, in 1971 and 'American Pie',

written by American folk rock singer-songwriter Don McLean in the same year, were among the most widespread American folksongs on the island at the time. In addition, the same survey also revealed that, although the English musician John Lennon and Canadian songwriter Neil Young were well-liked by the Taiwanese, American folksong singers such as Bob Dylan and Don McLean frequently remained at the top of the monthly chart under the category “best foreign stars” (Zhang 2003: 61).

The music of the American folksong revival was prized especially among young Taiwanese people. It predominantly developed its popularity on university campuses. Since the mid-1960s, it was a common practice for both the commercial and student cover bands to hold American pop concerts on a regular basis at universities. By the early 1970s, American folk songs were also being frequently added to the campus concert programmes. The performance style and images of the American folk song singers were mimicked by the Taiwanese students. T-shirts, jeans and guitars were the most typical images of student folksong singers, which marked a huge contrast with the Mandarin and Taiyu singers in Taiwan at the time (Hsin 2012: 147–148).

Singing modern American folksong to guitar accompaniment became of great interest to many Taiwanese university students in the 1970s, and some students even went a step further to develop themselves as amateur singers who were normally employed part-time by restaurants or the American army clubs. For many young, educated Taiwanese people, singing at commercial sites as an amateur singer was one of their first choices as it enabled them to earn a decent income compared with the other jobs that were available for students. The songs performed by the students at the commercial sites in the early 1970s were not written by themselves or other local songwriters, but were normally cover versions of the original American songs.

In 1973, a café restaurant called *Aidiya* (艾迪亞)<sup>20</sup> opened in Taipei. The café was famous for offering its customers live gigs of American folk songs of the 1960s while they dined (Fang 2008: 38) and was extremely popular among both the student singers and the customers, who were normally fellow students. The concept of *Aidiya* was successful and this business idea was followed by various investors who also recognised its potential. A large number of restaurants or cafés that offered similar services to *Aidiya* opened in different cities across Taiwan. This type of business was known as ‘*Min’ge* canting’ (Folk song restaurant, 民歌餐廳) (Hsin 2012: 146). However, the term ‘folk song’ here refers to the American popular folk songs of the 1960s and 1970s. The *min’ge* restaurant was not only an important place for promoting American pop music in Taiwanese society but also became a unique by-product of Taiwan’s popular music industry. The passion among young people for *min’ge* restaurants lasted for a long time, even after the American folk song declined in popularity in Taiwan in the late 1970s. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, local Taiwanese campus folksongs eventually became the focus of the *min’ge* restaurant song programme, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

The wide reach of American popular music in Taiwan in the 1960s and 1970s was in a sharp contrast to local Taiwanese pop. Both Taiwanese Taiyu and Mandarin songs were disdained and very much controlled by the government, with censorship commonly applied. Nevertheless, foreign music, which was mainly imported from the US, had far fewer restrictions imposed on it by the Kuomintang authorities. The American folk music of the 1960s originated to express support for the American Civil Rights Movement and anti-Vietnam War movement, so this musical genre was largely associated with the resistance and protests in American society. However, the implication of the American folk revival in American

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<sup>20</sup> The café/restaurant *Aidiya* is still trading today, more than forty years after it opened.

society was lost in translation when it arrived in Taiwan. It was not regarded as a music that suggested a certain political ideology or threat by the KMT government and therefore was less constrained in Taiwanese society. While the broadcasting of Taiyu pop was strictly limited on any media in the early 1970s, Western pop (American and English pop songs in particular) programmes were allowed up constitute up to 30 per cent of the overall coverage (Zhang 2003: 58–59).

The tranquil attitude of the Chinese Nationalist authorities towards Western popular music, together with the process of globalisation and Americanisation, resulted in the wide spread of American pop in Taiwanese society. For the past three decades, university students expressed their identity as Taiwanese young elites through the use of American pop music/popular culture consumption. Nevertheless, when the island underwent a succession of segregations from the international political stage in the 1970s, the adoration for the West, particularly the US, started to be examined and reconsidered by the educated.

After Taiwan became disaffiliated from the UN and the island's friendship with the US was formally ended in the 1970s, questions about Taiwanese national identity were raised. Politically Taiwan was highly dependent on US support, as its culture had considerable influence on the island. Nonetheless, it was believed by the Taiwanese young elites that the question of the island's identity could be answered by constructing a new soundscape; the Taiwanese nation could be expressed through the notions of local voices which differed from those of America. This commenced when university students such as Yang Xian (楊弦) and Li Shuangzhe (李雙哲) felt the need to “sing our own songs” (Zhang 2003: 76–131) rather than blindly pursue foreign music from the West.

## Chapter 2: ‘Let Us Sing Our Own Songs’ – Yang Zujun (楊祖珺) and the Resignification of Campus Folk songs

If we’re only talking about me in my early twenties, if it wasn’t in order to have the power to engage with issues of nation, country and society, then what was the point of singing?<sup>21</sup> (my translation)

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, a popular musical phenomenon called the Campus Folk Song movement (校園民歌) emerged in Taiwanese society. It originated among a number of non-professional singers and songwriters – mainly college and university students – and was sparked when Taiwan experienced a series of exclusions from the world political stage at that time. Configured as a protest against Western countries’ desertion of Taiwan, the movement aimed to sing Our Own Songs in Our Own Language in order to resist Western cultural hegemony, especially American popular music, that was popular in the urban regions of Taiwan during this highly turbulent period (Moskowitz 2010: 34).

The island of Taiwan was only taken by the Chinese Nationalist party (KMT) from the Japanese colonial government in the late 1940s, which resulted in various forms of resistance and major civil unrest such as the 228 Incident in 1947 (see Chapter 1). Since the late 1940s, the authorities played an active role in promoting and controlling the parameters of discourse surrounding national identity, and the implantation of Chinese consciousness and identity was continually propagated on the island through various means including the education system, and tight media control. The Campus Folk Song movement of the 1970s, which was nationalist in tone, shows that during KMT rule the identity of Taiwan unquestionably shifted from that of a Japanese colonised island to a region of China. The rising popularity of the Campus Folk

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<sup>21</sup> Yang, Zujun. 2008. *A Voice That Could Not Be Silenced- The TC Yang Collection 1977-2003* [CD liner notes]. TMCD-347. Taipei: Tree Music.

Song eventually led to the commercialisation of the movement in the late 1970s, when it came to dominate the popular music industry in Taiwan. Although the life span of the movement was relatively short, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, a large number of the songs produced through it achieved record sales on the island and spread to the other Chinese communities, such as Singapore, Hong Kong and China.

The music of the Taiwanese campus folk song was intended to emphasise the 'Chineseness' of the country in opposition to American cultural hegemony. The nationalism and socio-ideological messages of the young elite were disclosed through poetic song texts in the Chinese language. Although it was conceived as an anti-American protest, ironically, the musical style of campus folk song was largely inspired by the American folk revival of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

In her analysis of social class and Chinese cultural identity in the Taiwanese campus folk song movement, Hsin Mei-Fen (2012) compares the American folk revival of the 1950s and the Taiwanese campus folk song movement during the 1970s. She claims that several musical aspects of the new American folk songs, particularly the songs and performance style of Bob Dylan, were adopted as a model by the Taiwanese young elite. By analysing the lyrics of Taiwanese campus folk songs Hsin argues that, unlike the music of Bob Dylan which was associated with anti-authoritarian social movements, the majority of the Taiwanese campus songs were deeply associated with the 'privileged' and the 'educated young elite' who were close to the centre of power, both socially and ideologically of Taiwanese society (Hsin 2012: 191).

The Campus Folk Song movement developed when society was under strict control by the KMT authorities. Nevertheless, less than a decade after the beginning of the folk song movement, Taiwan commenced its transition to democracy. The decade of the 1980s for the

island was what Hsiao describes as “the ten golden years of social movements” (黃金社運十年) (Hsiao 1991: 58). Social activists formed a number of vital and revolutionary movements. Questions about foreign affairs, social class, gender, politics, economy and the environment were raised to challenge the authorities. This social activism consequently led to street protests and demands for democracy and social equality.

Yang Zujun, who graduated from university in the late 1970s, was one of the leading young social and political activists during the 1980s. Yang was born in a wealthy Mainlander (外省人)<sup>22</sup> family and was raised in the capital city of Taipei. Like many other university students at the time, the young Yang Zujun advocated the idea of Singing Our Own Songs, and she was a major figure in Taiwanese campus folk song movement. Although Yang was not a song writer, she was known as a singer, especially of songs written by her friend Li Shuangze (李雙澤). Li composed twelve campus folk songs while he was studying at Tamkang University (淡江大學) before his death in 1977. When Yang Zujun became an activist during the 1980s, she adapted Li’s apolitical music to project her own social and political-ideological messages during her participation in various social and political movements.

To Yang Zujun, the campus folk songs were not ordinary music. This was a vital tool to combat state authoritarianism as it could act as a wake-up call to Taiwanese youth who were ‘being confused by the KMT regime’.<sup>23</sup> Li Shuangze’s music first became commercially available in 1979 when Yang Zujun released her eponymous album *Yang Zujun*, although it was banned by the authorities less than two months after its release as it was considered politically sensitive (Yang 1992: 31). Despite its prohibition, Li’s music continued to be promoted through various social movements and was adopted as a means for protest by Yang

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<sup>22</sup> ‘Mainlanders’ were people who arrived in Taiwan with the KMT’s retreat in 1949.

<sup>23</sup> Yang, Zujun. 2008. *A Voice That Could Not Be Silenced- The TC Yang Collection 1977-2003* [CD liner notes]. TMCD-347. Taipei: Tree Music.



Zujun. Because of Yang Zujun's rebellious acts, Li Shuangze's music was consequently banned by the authorities and only became available after martial law was lifted in 1987.

In her study of popular music around the world, Jennifer Rycenga suggests that political songs fall into two different groups: 'protest music' and 'music of resistance' (Rycenga 2003: 345) and she emphasised the distinction between the two. 'Protest music', according to Rycenga, makes "explicit statements of opposition" (Rycenga 2003: 345). Protest music discloses a performer's political and oppositional intention (Street 2006: 50) while music of resistance, on the other hand, is a type of coded music. This kind of musical performance can be read as political, or used in political ways, but this was neither the performer's nor the composer's original intention (Street 2006: 50). Li Shuangze's music falls into the latter category as it was adopted by Yang Zujun to present her own oppositional political statements. By singing Li Shuangze's apolitical songs at social and political movements, Yang Zujun politicised Li's music.

Street discusses David Laing's notion of political songs and notes that 'music of resistance' may be viewed from the perspectives of both the state and the audience or fans (Street 2006: 50). For most countries, the governments themselves establish the parameters of resistance through their tightly controlled definitions of what is permissible (Cloonan and Garofalo 2003), and censorship is commonly exercised. In Taiwan, as it was often associated with subversive ideologies, popular music under the KMT regime underwent heavy censorship. Songs were rigorously scrutinised before they could be released, and often the meaning of politically neutral songs could be subverted, so these were seen as a threat and restricted and censored.

The music of Li Shuangze serves as an example. Because of Yang Zujun, Li's music caught the attention of the authorities. Although his musical genre developed out of Chinese

nationalist sentiments and most of Li's music simply described the beauty of the land and the people of Taiwan, it was interpreted as promoting Taiwanese localism and thus as conflicting with the Chinese nationalism that the KMT government promoted during its rule. Li's music was therefore considered unsuitable for public consumption and was censored.

In this chapter I explore the possibility that the Campus Folk Song movement of the 1970s served as a source for Taiwanese identity-making. I shall first explore the idea that the Campus Folk Song movement was created within the process of forming a Chinese identity in Taiwan. For this section I focus on the musical style of the movement. It is generally known that the Taiwanese campus folk song was created to emphasise its Chinese identity and to differentiate Taiwan from the West; nevertheless, the musical style involved many elements derived from American modern folk songs. How is Chinese identity conveyed in the songs?

Hsin Mei-Fen suggests that the Campus Folk Song movement was profoundly connected with the centre of the power through the young elite who formed a socially and ideologically privileged section of Taiwanese society (Hsin 2012: 191). The Campus Folk Song movement, therefore, could be considered as a representation of the dominant culture, although the music was created and disseminated without the active involvement and promotion of the ruling government. How, then, did the music of Taiwanese campus folk songs, which were considered politically correct at the time, come to be deployed as an act of resistance by Yang Zujun? How did such musical interventions assist in the negotiation of a Taiwanese identity that was different from the Chinese identity created and promoted by the KMT authorities during the 1980s?

## 2.1 The New Modern Chinese Folk Song in Taiwan

After Taiwan became disaffiliated from the UN and the island's alliance with the US formally ended in the 1970s, questions about Taiwanese national identity were raised. Politically, Taiwan was highly dependent on US support, and its culture had considerable influence on the island. Nonetheless, the Taiwanese young elite believed that the question of the island's identity could be answered by constructing a new soundscape; Taiwanese national identity could be expressed through local voices, which differed from those of America. This approach evolved when university students such as Yang Xian (楊弦) felt the need to sing our own songs rather than blindly pursuing foreign music from the West (Zhang 2003: 76–131).

On 6 June 1975, a concert entitled *An Evening of Modern Chinese Folk Song* (中國現代民歌之夜) was given in Taipei by a university student, Yang Xian (楊弦). At this concert, Yang performed eight songs that he had composed, including 'Xiangchou siyun' (Four Nostalgic Verses) and 'Min'geshou' (The Folk Song Singer). The lyrics of Yang's songs were drawn from the collection of contemporary poems called 'Baiyu kugua' (White Bitter Melon), written by the Chinese-born Taiwanese poet, Yu Guangzhong<sup>24</sup> (余光中) (Zhong 2007:35-38). The poems in the collection of 'Baiyu Kugua', which was first published in 1974, contained a strong Chinese nationalist message. Yu Guangzhong's composition described the beauty of and longing for Mainland China. The poem entitled 'Four Nostalgic Verses' (鄉愁四韻), which was also incorporated into Yang Xian's music, serves as a good example:

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<sup>24</sup> Yu Guangzhong, who was born in Nanjing in 1928, had to flee the Japanese invading forces with his family in 1937. On returning to Nanjing in 1947, he again fled the Communist advance during the civil war. His family settled in Taiwan in 1950. Among the first students to graduate in foreign languages from the National Taiwan University, Yu began a career as a university lecturer in 1956. His poetry collections include *Lanse de yumao* [Blue feather], *Zai lengzhan de niandai* [Cold War years] and *Yu yongheng bahe* [Tug-of-war with eternity]. He also published various volumes of essays and literary criticism (Chen 2013: 39–105).

给我一瓢长江水啊长江水	Give me water from Yangtze River
那酒一样的长江水	The water of Yangtze River is like wine
那醉酒的滋味是乡愁的滋味	The taste of that wine is the taste of nostalgia
给我一瓢长江水啊长江水	Give me water from Yangtze River
给我一掌海棠红啊海棠红	Give me a red begonia, a red begonia
那血一样的海棠红	The colour of the begonia is as red as blood
那沸血的烧痛是乡愁的烧痛	The blood reminds me of the pain of nostalgia
给我一掌海棠红啊海棠红	Give me a red begonia, a red begonia
给我一片雪花白啊雪花白	Give me a snowflake, a snowflake
那信一样的雪花白	The flake is as white as a letter from home
那家信的等待是乡愁的等待	The longing for that letter from home is nostalgia
给我一片雪花白啊雪花白	Give me a snow flake, a snow flake
给我一朵腊梅香啊腊梅 香	Give me a wintersweet flower
那母亲一样的腊梅香	The smell of the flower is like my mother
那母亲的芬芳是乡土的芬芳	Mother's perfume is the scent of my homeland
给我一朵腊梅香啊腊梅香	Give me a flower, a wintersweet flower
('Xiangchou Siyun' by Yu Guangzhong, 1974; my translation) <sup>25</sup>	

Both the Yangtze River and red begonia (*haitang*) mentioned in Yu's poem symbolise China. The later phrases including 'letter from home' and 'mother' reflect a sense of homesickness. 'Four Nostalgic Verses' was one of several poems in which Yu Guangzhong

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<sup>25</sup> Yang, Xian. 1995. *A Collection of Modern Chinese Folk Songs*. CD. DSD0046. Taipei: Record.

expressed his love and longing for his ‘homeland’, despite having lived in Taiwan for more than twenty years.

The Chinese poems of Yu Guangzhong were expressed in Yang Xian’s music through two major disparate musical styles. The expressive texts of ‘Four Nostalgic Verses’, for instance, were uttered in a musical format derived from Western classical music with strict structures. ‘Four Nostalgic Verses’ was composed for a choir of alto, tenor and bass led by a solo soprano. Yang Xian opened the music with a solo piano that was quickly joined by a violin. The long instrumental introduction to the song was in a minor key presented like a short Western classical concerto. ‘Four Nostalgic Verses’ is a slow, lyrical song, sung in *bel canto* operatic style (美聲唱法). However, for songs like ‘Min’geshou’ (The Folk Song Singer) and ‘Rondo’, Yang drew many musical references from the modern American folk songs of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Taking ‘Min’geshou’ as an example, the song was in C major with a simple 4/4 tempo, which was common practice for American folk songs at the time. The *allegretto* (lively) melody was accompanied by a guitar, piano and violin. ‘Min’geshou’ was written as a duet for male and female singers, performed in an untrained vocal style. In addition to its Chinese lyrics, the harmonic arrangement, use of instrumentation and performance style of the song were comparable to that of modern American folk songs, which were well received by the Taiwanese university students at the time.

In the 1970s, Chinese Mandarin songs replaced Taiwanese language popular songs (*Taiyu ge*) and took over the mainstream Taiwanese music market. Furthermore, Western pop, especially popular songs from America, took a large proportion of sales in the Taiwanese market, as they were the prime choice for university students who were the main buyers of records. In his book entitled *Songs* (歌), Yang Xian explained his intentions in composing his modern Chinese folk songs:

Western (American) contemporary folk songs have been popular (in Taiwan) for several years; their vivid rhythmic patterns and fresh melodies are well liked by our younger generation. However, due to cultural and environmental differences, when a Chinese person is listening to or learning to sing those songs in a foreign language, they must feel a communication gap. (Yang 1977: 65; my translation)

In 1995, Yang Xian again described his purpose in composing songs during the late 1970s:

It was just a simple thought. I hoped that I could compose our own songs and sing in our own language, and not merely sing foreign songs. (Ma and Tao 1995: 15; my translation)

Yang's statements not only suggest the extent of the influence of American culture in Taiwanese society in the 1970s, but also demonstrate his subjectivity as a Chinese youth living in a society that had experienced a great influx of foreign popular music. Yang recognised that popular music in Taiwanese society offered no sense of belonging and did not reflect his sense of Chinese identity, so he deliberately set out to create a new musical format – the Chinese Modern Folk Song – that he thought could reflect the authenticity of his culture and identity.

In Yang's view, at this stage, being 'Chinese' was a response to American cultural dominance over Taiwan. The sharp difference that would later develop between Chinese identity and Taiwanese identity was not yet being expressed in the popular arena. For Yang, at this time, our own language is Chinese, and it expresses opposition to American hegemony. But not long afterwards, a shift occurs, and 'our own language' is Taiwanese, voiced in opposition to Chinese hegemony.

The need to use the folk songs of Taiwan to strengthen Chinese identity in Taiwan is stressed by a well-known Taiwanese ethnomusicologist, Xu Changhui (許常惠) in his book *Looking for Roots in People's Music* (追尋民族音樂的根):

When popular music [in Taiwan] becomes decadent, and when art music becomes purely decorative, only the national life force of folk songs can save and restore them. Let the folk songs that are hidden in every Chinese person's heart be injected into our popular and art music, like a transfusion of blood. Because this is the only way for our society to avoid being colonised by foreign pop music, and prevent our musical world from becoming a desert. (Xu 1987: 42; my translation)

Yang Xian's modern Chinese folk songs were created to emphasise a Chinese identity and he focused on two aspects: Chinese lyrics and the adoption of traditional Chinese musical instruments. By incorporating modern Chinese language poems as the song texts, Yang crafted the songs with a sense of 'Chineseness' that emphasised a contrast from the West. Chineseness was also stressed musically by implanting Chinese traditional instruments into his arrangements, in which Western acoustic guitars, violins, pianos and flutes were commonly used alongside traditional Chinese instruments, such as the *nanhu* (南胡, southern fiddle), *zheng* (箏, zither) and *pipa* (琵琶, plucked lute).

Yang Xian was not the sole songwriter to compose music in such a manner. Chinese folk melodies and musical instruments had already been incorporated into forms of Chinese popular music which were largely based on Western musical forms as early as the late 1920s (Jones 1992: 9). Jeroen de Kloet argues, in his study of pop and rock music in modern China, that traditional musical instruments in modern Chinese pop or rock signify Chineseness, as they reaffirm notions of cultural difference (de Kloet 2008: 157–158). Although Yang Xian primarily drew on modern American folk songs and Western classical music as frames for his modern Chinese folk songs, both the Chinese lyrics and the use of traditional instruments emphasised the cultural dissimilarities, so a Chinese consciousness and identity were therefore acknowledged in Yang's music.

Yang Xian's modern Chinese folk songs were written to reflect a younger Chinese generation. He believed that to create a musical genre that represented the new blood of the Chinese nation, the element of modernity must also be considered in addition to the 'Chineseness' of the compositions. To achieve this sense of modernity, Yang mirrored the musical style and structure of modern American folk songs in songs such as 'Min'geshou' (The Folk song Singer), as American popular culture and pop music were considered advanced and modern in Taiwan at the time. Yang Xian's use of Western classical frames was also ideologically loaded. In Chinese modern music history, there was no lack of experimentation with fusing Chinese and Western classical music to create a modern Chinese sound.

In his analysis of modern Chinese musical life, Andrew Jones points out that, during the social reformation sparked by the May 4th Movement in 1919, a new generation of musicians and educators attempted to build a new, modern musical infrastructure in China (Jones 2001:25). These young Chinese elite, many of whom had been directly exposed to Western music and 'scientific' education, believed that European music was 'a set of superior technologies for organisation and use of sound' (Jones 2001: 25). Chinese music, on the other hand, was considered a tradition that was "at a standstill" (Jones 2001: 25) and in need of reorganisation. During the May 4th Movement, this 'superior' Western classical music was adopted as a frame to 'improve' traditional Chinese music. Yang Xian adopted a similar approach in his modern Chinese folk songs. Particularly when he intended to emphasise 'Chineseness' in songs like 'Four Nostalgic Verses', the musical genre moved away from the modern American folk song towards Western classical music.

Yang Xian's songs that were performed at the 1975 concert in Taipei were later collected on his first album, *A Collection of Modern Chinese Folk Songs* (中國現代民歌集), released in the same year by the Hong Jiangqun Foundation (洪建全基金會) (Zhong 2007: 37). The



thousand copies of the album initially produced sold out within a month, and the second and third editions were published shortly afterwards (Ma 1981:12). Over the years following the concert and release of the album, Yang Xian's *Modern Chinese Folk Songs* sparked considerable discussion and criticism. Later in the same year Hu Hongbo (胡洪波), a Taiwanese scholar of Chinese literature, wrote a newspaper article criticising Yang's music, entitled 'Folk song' is not like this' ('民歌'不是這樣的).

In this article, Hu defined a 'folk song' as having three characteristics: 1) It must be produced by common people. 2) Before being notated down, it must have been passed down orally from generation to generation. 3) It must be well liked by most people in the society (Hu 1975; my translation).<sup>26</sup> According to Hu, Yang Xian's new, westernised music did not fulfil any of these conditions and so should not be considered a form of folk song. This kind of attitude persisted in musicological circles for decades. Xu Changhui, who is known as a promoter of the folk music of Taiwan, continued to make negative comments about *Modern Chinese Folk Songs* into the late 1980s:

Recently, we have seen two kinds of theory that have made us wonder whether to laugh or cry. One is malicious criticism of our native folk music, the other is the production of fake folk songs<sup>27</sup>, which are called modern folk songs, or composed folk songs...this is born of ignorance. Folk songs, by definition, are transmitted by the folk over a long period of time: how can there be such a thing as a composed folk song? I hope they will seek out a real folk musician, and not betray folk music by producing this fake folk music. (Xu 1987: 40)

Parallel arguments concerning 'real' and 'fake' folk songs have raged among Chinese musicologists during the post-Cultural Revolution period. The Australia-based Chinese musicologist, Yang Mu, wrote of the lack of 'authentic' folk songs, and preponderance of modern composed folk songs, often with revolutionary lyrics, in the huge government-

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<sup>26</sup> Hu Hongbo. 'Folksong' is not like this'. *Central News*. 21 December 1975.

<sup>27</sup> Compare the controversies over English 'fakesong' and the critiques of folk song collectors and composers like Cecil Sharpe (Harker 1985). For further discussion see Bithell and Hill (2014).

supported project Anthology of Chinese Folk Music, and labelled the project an effort to cheat readers (Yang 1994: 303–320). Despite the criticism, the music of Yang Xian gained support from scholars such as Yu Guangzhong, who published his disagreement with Hu Hongbo's criticism in the same newspaper a few months later:

Yang Xian named his music 'folk song', because he wanted to indicate its purity and naturalness, and to draw a clear line between his music and contemporary pop music. However, the contemporary definition of a folk song is very different from the traditional ones. Recent Western [i.e., American] folk songs also failed to fulfil all of Hu Hongbo's definitions, but those songs are still categorised as 'folk songs' in Western society. (Yu 1976; my translation)

Yu Guangzhong also argued that the term folksong had been reshaped in the modern era and that the American folk song revival movement of the late 1950s provided a good example of this. In the same article, Yu also claimed that Yang Xian's *Modern Chinese Folk songs* were a type of 'folk song' that was:

... perhaps are 'too warm' for Western rock (西洋搖滾樂) fans, and too 'Westernised' for traditional folk song fans. To real art musicians, Yang Xian's songs might seem too 'simple'. However, there are some special elements in his Modern Chinese folk songs which you cannot find in Western rock, traditional Chinese folk songs or art music.... Chinese youths need to sing, and they need to sing new songs.<sup>28</sup> (my translation)

Musically, Yang Xian's modern Chinese folk songs offered only a few hints of Chineseness, and certainly had little in common with the traditional understanding and values of folk music. However, what underlies his music was the intention not only to create a type of music that was dissimilar to Western pop and Chinese pop, but also to use music as a means to construct a Taiwanese identity, which for Yang Xian was a Chinese identity that shared in and belonged to the Chinese nation.

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<sup>28</sup> Yu, Guangzhong. 'The Changing Folk Songs'. *Central News*, 13 February 1976.



Figure 2.1 The Cover of Yang Xian's album *A Collection of Modern Chinese Folk Songs*  
 (<http://www.oocities.org/hkfolkclub/folktw/folktw04.htm>, accessed on 28/11/2008).

Yang Xian's modern Chinese folk songs display many parallels with a popular music genre, *tongsu* music (通俗音樂), that developed in China during the late 1970s and 1980s. Andrew Jones differentiates between *tongsu* music and *liuxing* music. While both terms mean 'popular music' in English, he defines *tongsu* music as music that is 'popularised, sanctioned, controlled and supported' (Jones 1992: 19) by the Chinese authorities and largely circulates in contemporary Chinese society. While *tongsu* music was considered a 'politically correct' (Jones 1992: 19) cultural product, *liuxing* music, on the other hand, refers to popular music that contains little or no political or ideological elements (Jones 1992: 18–22). Like Yang Xian's modern Chinese folk songs, the vocal style of the popularised *tongsu* music contains a mixture of characteristics taken from Chinese regional folk songs and traditional Chinese singing, which are often accompanied by Western instruments, and harmonised in ways drawn from Western popular music (Jones 1992: 19). Even though Yang Xian did not intend to be political, his music carries a political ideology and form of nationalism that developed in mid-twentieth century China, and had been imprinted on Taiwanese society by the KMT authorities, while

also being developed in parallel ways in mainland China under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party.

In his study of the folk song movement in Taiwanese society during the 1970s, Zhang Zhaowei claims that Yang's Chinese lyrics successfully presented a clear division of the Chinese self and Western Other, but musically Yang's new music was more connected to elite culture as it shared many of the characteristics of Western classical music (Zhang 2003: 83–84). However, I believe that the format, instrumental arrangement and singing style of the modern Chinese folk songs all suggested that Yang Xian's new music also came from diverse sources including the modern American folk songs which were very popular in Taiwan at the time.

Hsin compares Yang's music with Bob Dylan's modern American folk songs in her Ph.D. thesis, concluding that both songwriters shared a common practice as their songs involved peaceful self-reflection. However, instead of engaging with issues related to the injustice and morality of an unequal, hierarchical society as Dylan did, Yang Xian's music served primarily as a reminder to his listeners: we are Chinese. And his message primarily addressed the desires of those who belonged to certain social classes in Taiwanese society: the privileged and the educated (Hsin 2012: 157).

In 1977, two years after the release of his first album, Yang Xian released a second album called *Xichu yangguan* (Leaving by the Western Pass, 西出陽關) (Zhong 2007: 38), in which he made major shifts both musically and lyrically. For this album, once again, Yang Xian incorporated modern poems in Chinese, and six compositions by a local Taiwanese poet named Yang Mu (楊牧) were adopted by Yang as lyrics. But in contrast to the lyrics of his first album, the Chinese metaphors were largely replaced by Taiwanese images. The poems of Yang Mu made many references to nature and were less focused on Chinese nationalism. Songs like

‘Bring you back to Hualian’ (帶你回花蓮) and ‘Seaside of Hengchun’ (恆春海邊) described the natural scenery in different parts of Taiwan, and both songs praised the beauty of the island.

Compared with the first album, a shift in musical style occurs with *Xichu yangguan* (1977), as this second album incorporates a local, Taiwanese element. A Taiwanese indigenous song, ‘The Beautiful Grain Plants’ (美麗的稻穗), was adapted and rearranged by Yang for inclusion on this album. It was composed by a Taiwanese aboriginal songwriter named Lu Senbao (陸森寶) in 1958 for the young aboriginal men who were at the frontline during the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis (823 砲戰), a conflict between China (The People’s Republic of China) and Taiwan (The Republic of China). Yang Xian’s version of ‘The Beautiful Grain Plants’ is a slow, lyrical piece, which retains almost no traditional aboriginal musical elements apart from the main body of the original melody and translated lyrics.

The melody was simplified and reorganised to fit a Western popular musical framework, and the song was performed by a solo singer accompanied by a guitar. The voice of Yang Xian was natural, soft and lyrical, and the influence of modern American folk songs can be strongly recognised in this song. ‘The Beautiful Grain Plants’ was not the only song that paid homage to modern American folk songs. Another example was ‘Bring you back to Hualian’, which was written for a vocal quartet, whose singing voices were natural, in contrast to the *bel canto* style of the first album. ‘Bring you back to Hualian’ was accompanied by a hand bell, harmonica, guitar and drum, which were commonly used in modern American folk songs. The simple melodies, vocal quality, and instrumentation in *Xichu yangguan* provided a striking contrast with most of the songs in *A Collection of Modern Chinese Folk Songs* that had been released just two years earlier.

Yang Xian’s move in releasing *Xichu yangguan* was distinctive, as the Chinese nationalism presented in his first album was no longer the main focus. *Xichu yangguan* can be

read as a transitional statement, combining Chinese nationalism with a new-found emphasis on local, Taiwanese identity. A sense of Taiwanese local identity was rising even if the songs did not directly espouse Taiwanese nationalism. Although it was apparent that, musically, modern American folk songs were the main model for the second album, it was also the first time that Taiwanese aboriginal music had been assimilated into a popular song.

Moreover, the lyrics placed strong emphasis on places in Taiwan, which also disclosed a shift of identity from China to Taiwan. The song 'Bring you back to Hualian' serves as a good example, as it expressed affection towards a small Taiwanese county. It was noticeable that the final phrase of the lyrics: 'this is our homeland' (這是我們的家鄉),<sup>29</sup> introduced an idea that diverged from Chinese Nationalist political ideology at the time. The keynote of national identity was to identify oneself as Chinese under the KMT's rule. The evidence in Yang Xian's songs suggested that the local Taiwanese consciousness was rising.

Later that year Yang Xian left Taiwan to take up his studies in the US. This marked the beginning of a long pause in his development in the Taiwanese music industry, as Yang Xian did not release his third album until over thirty years later, in 2008. Although Yang Xian was not an active songwriter and his music did not become widespread immediately in the mid-1970s, his notion of Sing Our Own Songs was influential. In the late 1970s, a young graduate named Li Shuangze (李雙澤) took a similar step by asking, 'Where are our own songs?' at an American pop concert held on a university campus in winter 1976. This question sparked the reform of Taiwanese popular music.

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<sup>29</sup> Yang, Xian. 2008. *A Collection of Yang Xian's Song 1975-1998*. CD. RD9038.4. Taipei: Rock Record.

## 2.2 Where are Our Own Songs? The Tamkang Incident

In the winter of 1976, a Western pop concert (西洋音樂演唱會) was held at Tamkang (淡江) University in Taiwan. It was hosted by Tao Xiaoqing (陶曉清), who had been hosting Western pop music radio programmes in Taiwan for several years. Li Shuangze, who was an alumnus of the university and had just completed his studies and travels in Spain, the Philippines and the US, was performing at the concert as a stand-in for the singer/songwriter, Hu Defu (胡德夫), who was unable to perform due to having been injured in a fight the day before. Li was the second performer at the concert. He walked onstage, holding his guitar in one hand and a bottle of Coca-Cola in the other. Before he began his performance, there was a short dialogue between the MC, Tao, the first singer and Li:

Li (to the audience): “I feel very happy because I’ve just came back to my homeland from abroad, but I’m still drinking Coca-Cola like every young person in America, the Philippines, Spain and Taiwan [...] (to the first performer) “What do you think about being Chinese and singing Western songs?”

The first singer: “I sing both Chinese and Western songs as long as they are good.”

Li: “Then shall we let Miss Tao answer this question? She’s presented radio programmes for more than ten years, and she can surely give us a good answer to it.”

Tao: “I’m here to host the concert today and did not expect an examination! It is not that we don’t sing our own songs but, please tell me, where are the modern Chinese folk songs?”

Li: “Before we can compose our own songs, we should sing other people’s music until we can write our own.”

Tao: “Then please sing a few songs for us.”

(Zhang 2003: 121–122; my translation)

Li first sang a few Taiwanese songs, including ‘Yuyehua’ (Flowers in a Rainy Night (雨夜花), first released during the Japanese occupation in 1932 by Deng Yuxiang (鄧雨賢), and ‘Bu Puowang’ (Mending a Fishing Net, 補破網) composed in the late 1940s when the Chinese

Nationalist government first arrived on the island. Both of these songs were sung in the Taiwanese language, and their musical style was deeply influenced by Japanese *enka* which was popular in Japan and Taiwan in the 1920s and 1930s. Taiwanese songs like ‘Flowers in Rainy Night’ and ‘Mending a Fishing Net’ were mainly composed in minor keys and based on the pentatonic scale. Li sang the songs in Taiwanese, accompanying himself on a guitar.

Li then went on to sing ‘Guofu jinian ge’ (Song of the Nation’s Father), which was composed by Li Jinhui, who was also known as the first songwriter of Chinese pop music. The lyrics were divided into three sections and written in memory of Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of the Republic of China. The lyrics of ‘Song of the Nation’s Father’ described the revolutions led by Sun Yat-sen and his vision for the new Republic of China. This was one of the patriotic songs that were widely dissimilated in Taiwanese society through the mass media and educational institutions during KMT rule: patriotic songs aimed to promote the political message that “we are all Chinese”.

While Li was singing at the concert, some audience members clapped, but others jeered. Hu Defu, who was sitting among the concert audience, recalled this during an interview:

Everyone at the concert was shocked. It was supposed to be a show of American pop music, which was adored by university students. The students were not there to listen to either Chinese songs or patriotic songs. Li Shuangze’s act meant nothing but troublemaking.

Li’s singing was interrupted by the audience.

Li (angrily): “You (the audience) want to listen to Western songs (西洋歌曲)? Fine! There are many good songs available anyway!”

After singing Bob Dylan’s ‘Blowing in the Wind’, Li walked off the stage. As soon as he had finished singing, Tao, the MC, said to the audience:



Tao: “It is a good question whether Chinese people should sing Western songs or not, but it is inappropriate to discuss such matters at this concert right now; our main purpose here is to enjoy our concert.”

Suddenly, one audience member shouted out: “Tao Xiaoqing, don’t try to hide your Western colonised mind (洋奴 心態)!” (Ma 1981; Zhang 2003: 121–122; my translation)

This event became known as the Tamkang Incident (淡江事件) in Taiwanese music history and marked the starting point of a new musical era in Taiwan. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, American pop culture and music were revered in Taiwanese society, especially on university campuses. The veneration of young intellectuals for the US resulted in a lack of interest in Taiwanese local culture. Despite its popularity with the wider public of the island, Taiwanese pop music was regarded by the educated elite as low class, shallow and vulgar. Even though Mandarin pop in the 1960s and 1970s faced fewer controls than the Taiwanese songs, a widespread dislike of both Mandarin and Taiwanese popular music was taken for granted on the university campuses.

Li Shuangze was already reconsidering his position as a Chinese youth, and delivered his message to his audience in his unique way by making trouble’ at the concert. After the Tamkang Incident, Li Shuangze’s question ‘where are our own songs?’ became a topic of debate in the *Tamkang Weekly News*, an internal publication of Tamkang University students. The majority of the comments by the students revealed support for Li Shuangze.

“I was shocked by Li Shuangze’s question. Yes, I have always loved listening to American pop, but I now ask myself ‘why’?

“There is nothing wrong with loving and singing American pop songs, but if you are unhappy when you hear our own folk songs and *Song of National Father*, which is highly meaningful, then we university students and our minds are truly becoming enslaved (by America) (洋奴).” (*Tamkang Weekly News* December 1976; my translation)

The actions of Li Shuangze gained support from the Tamkang students, but criticism also followed. Tao Xiaoqing, the MC of the Tamkang concert, wrote in a Taiwanese pop magazine:

Why are people called Western slaves (洋奴) just because they sing Western songs?... Why humiliate people who enjoy American pop in order to achieve a goal? ... It was such a selfish act and a narrow-minded comment! (Tao 1977: 20–21; my translation)

After considerable support and criticism, the question that Li had raised: ‘where are our own songs?’ remained unanswered. A student from Tamkang University called Yang Zujun, who was also one of the American pop performers, published an article entitled ‘The Thoughts of a Chinese Person Who Sings Foreign Songs’ (中國人唱外國歌的心情) for Tamkang Weekly News:

I believe that no one would happily think, ‘Yes, this is the music that represents our nation’ when singing foreign songs... However, may I ask the young people of this generation, have we ever created something that truly belong to us, the Chinese? ... I do hope we will have our own songs soon. And I hope those who have sharply criticised and questioned ‘why Chinese do not sing Chinese songs’ will compose us some good songs of our own! I sincerely hope so! (Yang 1992: 14–15)

Tao also commented that, “The young people would sing our own songs if there were songs of our own!” (Tao 1977: 21).

The comments of both Yang Zujun and Tao Xiaoqing stressed that there were no songs of our own. After reading Yang’s note, Li Shuangze reconsidered his question and dedicated himself to writing ‘our own songs’ (Yang 1992: 18). Six months later, by the summer of 1977, he had composed a total of nine songs, including ‘The Old Drummer’ (老鼓手), ‘The Beautiful Island’ (美麗島) and ‘Young China’ (少年中國). Although Li and Yang Xian shared a similar notion of creating a new type of music that belonged to ‘us’, Li aimed to construct his music in a different style from Yang Xian’s modern Chinese folk songs. Li stated in *Tamkang Weekly*

*News* that it was his purpose to compose songs that could be sung by everyone, as this was the true meaning of a ‘folk song’ (Lu 1976).

Li continued commenting on Yang Xian’s music, claiming that it was ‘too complicated, too resplendent and too westernised’ (Lu 1976). The music of Li Shuangze was deliberately kept simple. Taking ‘The Old Drummer’ as an example, Li started the song with a short introduction played on a solo guitar. The piece is in A minor, with an ABAB form. The melody is slow and in a 4/4 rhythmic pattern. The strong first and third beats of each bar are emphasised with accents to mimic the sound of a drum. The voice of the singer is natural, in contrast with some of Yang Xian’s use of *bel canto* style.

Musically, Li Shuangze’s songs were dissimilar to Yang Xian’s modern Chinese folk songs. However, in the lyrics, Li adopted a similar approach to Yang, adopting poems by local Taiwanese poets. Li used the compositions of Chen Xiuxi (陳秀喜) and Jiang Xun (蔣勳) for some of his songs, among the best-known being ‘The Beautiful Island’ (Formosa) (CD website link track 2)<sup>30</sup> by Chen<sup>31</sup> and ‘Young China’ by Jiang<sup>32</sup>, which were lyrical poems about the island of Taiwan. Chen Xiuxi started her poem by describing the island as the ‘cradle’ of the people who were held in their ‘mother’s arms’.

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<sup>30</sup> Leftbo. 2010. 美麗島-李雙澤& 楊祖珺 [‘The Beautiful Island’. Sung by Li Shuangze and Yang Zujun] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKIYSvLVTdg> (accessed on 21/06/2016)

<sup>31</sup> The original name of the Chen Xiuxi’s poem is called ‘Taiwan’ (台灣), and was composed in 1973.

<sup>32</sup> The poem ‘Young China’ (少年中國) was first published by Jiang Xun in 1980, three years after Li Shuangze’s composition.

我們搖籃的美麗島	Our cradle, the beautiful island
是母親溫暖的懷抱	We were held in our mother's arms
驕傲的祖先正視著	Our proud ancestors were watching
正視著我們的腳步	Watching every step we take

Later in the poem, Chen emphasised that the island was a free land, with endless life and resources on it.

婆娑無邊的太平洋	In the endless Pacific ocean
懷抱著自由的土地	It was our free land
溫暖的陽光照耀著	The sun shone bright and warm
照耀著高山和田園	On the mountains and farms
我們這裡有勇敢的人民	We were the bravest people
羣路藍縷以啟山林	We worked hard together
我們這裡有無窮的生命	We had limitless lives
水牛稻米香蕉玉蘭花	Buffalos, Rice, Bananas, and Yulan Flowers

(‘The Beautiful Island’ by Li Shuangze: 1977<sup>33</sup>; my translation)

Chen Xiuxi used references from nature to express her affection for her country, and Li Shuangze arranged this poem for a solo singer in a lyrical style accompanied by a guitar, with a slow, waltz-like, 3/4 rhythmic pattern throughout the piece.

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<sup>33</sup> Li Shuangze. 2008. *Salute! Singing Our Own Songs*. CD. WFM08005. Taipei: Thirty Seven Productions



Figures 2.2: The Image of Li Shuangze

(<http://opinion.cw.com.tw/blog/profile/368/article/4305>, accessed on 21/06/2016).

Compared to Yang Xian, the references to China in Li Shuangze's music were less apparent. In 'The Beautiful Island', the island of Taiwan was the focus. Li expressed his love for the island through Chen's lyrical poem. Li's 'The Beautiful Island' was comparable to Yang Xian's second album as both emphasised the island of Taiwan. Li Shuangze not only emphasised the 'nation', but also the 'people of the nation'. His other songs, such as 'I Know' (我知道), referenced Taiwanese people of various social classes, including farmers, primary school students, fishermen and workers who were less privileged in society.

However, Li adopted a different approach in his setting of Jiang Xun's 'Young China'. To emphasise its 'Chineseness', Li adopted pentatonic scales. *Young China* is in the A minor key and in an ABABAB form. There are three tempo settings for the song: a slow singing for the first four phrases (A) and a shift to a fast, marching-like tempo for the last four phrases (B). In between, the speed is slow, with a long pause at the end on the short phrase: 'You said to

me’, which works as a transition and dividing line between the A (slow and grand) and B (fast and lively) sections. The fast B section has a military-style melody.

(A)

我們隔著迢遙的山河	We are separated by mountain and rivers
去看望祖國的土地	Looking at our homeland from afar
你用你的足跡	You use your footsteps
我用我遊子的鄉愁	I use my traveller’s homesickness

(Transition)

你對我說	You said to me
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(B)

古老的中國沒有鄉愁	The old China has no homesickness
鄉愁是給沒有家的人	Homesickness is for the homeless
少年的中國也不要鄉愁	Don’t be homesick young China
鄉愁是給不回家的人	Homesickness is for those do not go home

(‘Young China’ by Li Shuangze: 1977<sup>34</sup>; my translation)

The reception of Li’s songs again focused on their lack of musical ‘Chineseness’. Taiwanese music critics, such as Wang Jinping (王津平), agreed that there were numerous traces of the musical elements of modern American folk songs in Li’s music. Both Zhang Zhaowei (2003: 133) and Mao Zhulun (毛鑄倫) pointed out that Li’s melodies were lyrical and obviously influenced by Dylan (Mao 1978: 59). In addition, the simple guitar chords and natural singing voice used by Li in his music were comparable to Dylan’s style.

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<sup>34</sup> Li Shuangze. 2008. *Salute! Singing Our Own Songs*. CD. WFM08005. Taipei: Thirty Seven Productions

Li Shuangze's realisation of 'our own songs' was apparently inspired by the Western popular music that he initially sought to counter. The musical and performance style and visual presentation of Li shared many similarities with American pop music, and arguably lacked an identifiable Chinese character. Peter Manuel noted, in his survey of non-Western pop music that, "the national element (of Chinese pop music) may consist only of language and such features as a preference for pentatonic melodies" (Manuel 1998: 221), arguing that popular music in non-Western cultures is typically the result of the syncretism and acculturation of Western pop.

However, in his study of Chinese rock music, Jeroen de Kloet challenges those music critics who believe that Chinese rock merely mimics Western rock, noting that Chinese rock 'sounds and looks the same, but not quite' (de Kloet 2003: 27). He argues that Chinese rock musicians negotiate the pressure to be authentic by indigenising their compositions in their own idiosyncratic ways, for example by incorporating visual presentation and sounds from the Cultural Revolution (de Kloet 2003: 60–67; 93–101). Countering the arguments of the critics of Chinese rock, de Kloet draws on Homi Bhabha's theory of colonial hegemony in which Bhabha argues that 'colonial mimicry is the desire for the reformed, recognizable Other' (Bhabha 1994: 86). Arguably, Li Shuangze's songs are equally localised, and equally authentic expressions of his personal sense of national identity at that time.

Perhaps ironically, Li Shuangze died after attempting to rescue an American from drowning less than two months after he completed the songs in 1977. His music did not disappear with his death, however. Li Shuangze's songs were first heard in public at his funeral, sung by his friends, pop songwriter and performer Hu Defu and Yang Zujun (Yang 1992: 19–20). During the late 1970s, Hu made a living performing covers of American pop songs in restaurants, while Yang Zujun was a student at Tamkang University at the time. For almost the

next forty years, Li Shuangze's songs were rearranged into various versions and performed by Hu and Yang.

### **2.3 Our Songs: the Modern Chinese Folk Songs**

During the mid-1970s, both Yang Xian and Li Shuangze raised the idea that the Taiwanese young elite were blindly pursuing American popular culture and music. They both believed that national identity should be construed and presented in music. The ideas of Singing Our Own Songs and 'singing Chinese songs' appealed to university students at the time. It was increasingly common for the young elite to write and sing Chinese songs. Tao Xiaoqing, the host of a radio programme called *Hot Music* (熱門音樂), noticed the trend among young people to write Chinese songs. Tao recognised the potential of this new type of song and decided to promote it through her radio programme in early 1977.

Tao Xiaoqin's *Hot Music* initially focused solely on American popular music. To introduce Chinese songs composed by young people, Tao labelled this type of music "modern Chinese folk songs" (中國現代民歌) (Zhang 2003: 90), which not only marked a division from American pop music, but also suggested a dissimilarity with the Mandarin pop songs which formed the mainstream of popular music in Taiwan at the time. In the first episode, Tao introduced songs that were written by six Taiwanese songwriters (Tao 1977a). Among these songwriters were Yang Xian and other amateur singer-songwriters who made their living by performing American pop in restaurants. The musical style that Tao intended to promote was strongly influenced by modern American folk songs, which were embraced by Taiwanese university students during the late 1970s. In terms of instrumentation, although traditional Chinese musical instruments such as the *dizi* (flute) were used in some songs, the acoustic guitar remained the main instrument for the majority of the compositions. Like the American



folk songs, most of these modern Chinese folk songs were written for solo performers. The singing style was natural, in contrast to Yang Xian's *bel canto* style modern Chinese folk songs that had been released two years earlier.

Tao's modern Chinese folk songs were scheduled to be played once a month; however, the duration and frequency of these programmes soon increased, as they were very well received by their listeners, who were mainly university students (Ma 1981: 13). To further promote the style, Tao Xiaoqing went a step further by sourcing songs from the listeners of the radio programme. Young artists were encouraged to compose and record songs on cassette tape, then send them to the radio station to be played. In addition, a polling system was set up to enable listeners to vote for their favourite modern Chinese folk song. Popular songwriters were invited to perform live and discuss their compositions on the radio programme (Ma 1981: 13).

In the late 1970s, Tao Xiaoqing's *Hot Music* offered opportunities for many young songwriters to perform. The programme increased greatly in popularity, and Tao extended her efforts to promote the modern Chinese folk song by organising conferences and public concerts. In October 1977, she released two music albums entitled *Our songs-1* (我們的歌: 一) and *Our Songs-2* (我們的歌: 二). Both albums featured young artists who had previously performed on Tao's radio programme, including Yang Zujun, who was a young graduate at the time, and Hu Defu.

The album set of *Our Songs* was a collection of songs composed by the young elite. Tao Xiaoqing wrote in the introduction to the album that the songs on *Our Songs* were not unified in terms of musical style or the themes of the lyrics. The album was a mixed selection of modern folk songs which were still experimental. However, the basic style of the modern Chinese folk song had already taken shape on these albums. Musically, they drew on models of American pop music of the time. However, the lyrics of *Our Songs* involved none of the

protest or political ideology commonly found in the modern American folk songs of the 1970s. Moreover, although all of the lyrics of *Our Songs* were in Chinese, the words themselves did not necessarily reflect the nationalist ideas presented in Yang Xian and Li Shuangze's songs. Instead, most of the lyrics were closely related to the young songwriter's personal life experiences (Zhang 2003:96).

The themes of *Our Songs* varied. The lyrics might be a quotation from a book, express affection for family members or celebrate friendship. Han Zhenghao's 'The Thoughts of Students' (學子的心聲), for example, describes a high school student struggling with his studies in preparation for the university entrance exam. 'Mother's Love' (媽媽的愛心), written by Wu Tongxiong and sung by Yang Zujun, describes the love between a mother and her child. The Chinese lyrics of *Our Songs* differed not only from the modern nationalist poems that both Yang Xian and Li Shuangze both adopted, but also from the lyrics of Mandarin pop in Taiwan which tended to focus on direct expressions of love, which feature infrequently on *Our Songs*. Instead, love and relationships were expressed through conservative, poetic metaphors, such as 'wind, moon, and sea' (Moskowitz 2010: 35). Most of the lyrics the *Our Songs* were carefully arranged in a poetic manner, which became one of the most distinctive characteristics of the modern Chinese folk song.

The modern Chinese folk songs became widespread in Taiwanese society due to Tao Xiaoqin's promotion via various media, including radio, concerts and magazines. The popularity of the music was reflected in the sales of records. *Our Songs* 1 and 2 were reissued more than ten times within a year (Ma 1995). However, the modern Chinese folk song drew criticism from music critics such as Yong Heng (永恆), who found the music "not modern... not Chinese... [and] not folk song", but, in fact, "completely absurd" (Yong 1977; Zhang 2003:

110–111). Yong Heng discussed the modern Chinese folk song in the Taiwan Shing Sheng Daily News in 1977:

The music of *Our Songs* is composed by Chinese and is filled with Chinese lyrics. However, my friends, who study ‘legitimate’ (正統) music, and myself disagree that the modern Chinese folk song is a type of music that can represent the Chinese. It is certainly not the ‘our songs’ of the Chinese people. (Zhang 2003: 110–111; my translation)

Yong Heng complained that modern Chinese folk song offered no national spirit (鄉土氣息) or national musical language (音樂語言), being no more than a mixture of foreign musical elements with Chinese lyrics, and that the singing and performance styles of the singers were indelicate and vulgar (Zhang: 2003:110–111). He concluded:

Why does the government approve of this kind of music? Do we not have cultural policies? Is the music allowed from the view of commercial interests? Do we really want our young people to learn this inferior, low quality music and singing? (Zhang: 2003: 111)

Tao Xiaoqing countered that the modern Chinese folk song represented “a new generation of China... modern Chinese people... the voice of the Chinese youth” (Tao 1977: 20). She believed that the modern Chinese folk song was a powerful tool that enabled young Chinese in Taiwan to express themselves. She argued that songs such as ‘The Thoughts of Students’ (學子的心聲), which described one’s innermost self, were closely related to the lives of young people (Zhang 2003: 108), that songs like that were “true folk songs ... if such songs did not symbolise a young China, what else could represent it?” (Zhang 2003: 108). She considered that:

One cannot deny the existence of (the modern Chinese folk song) in society and, no matter what it’s called, such music has grown strongly and spread rapidly among the Taiwanese (Zhang 2003: 107).

The style was never recognised fully by Taiwanese critics, but it became undeniably popular on Taiwan’s university and college campuses though its promotion via public media.

The initially non-commercial genre of the modern Chinese folk song attracted the commercial interests of the record companies, who recognised a business opportunities and turned this musical genre into a profitable product in the late 1970s.

## **2.4 The Commercialisation of Campus Folk Song**

The ideas of Singing Our Own Songs achieved wide currency through Tao Xiaoqing's promotion of the Modern Chinese Folk Song. The rise of this new musical movement caught the attention of a local record company, Xin'ge Records (新格唱片), which recognised the business potential of young people's music and planned to transform the non-commercial modern Chinese folk song, which was already widespread on Taiwan's university campuses, into a commercial product. It launched an annual song-writing and singing competition named the Golden Song Award (金韻獎) to encourage more young people to participate in the business of song-writing. The winning songs would be recorded and released as an album (Moskowitz 2010: 34).

The Golden Song Award contest proved popular among young Taiwanese. Each year, thousands entered the competition, mainly university students (Moskowitz 2010: 34). Every year from 1977 to 1981 Xin'ge released two albums of winning songs. The popularity of these songs written by young people expanded from the university campus to the wider society through active promotion by Xin'ge Records through different media, including concerts, magazines, TV ads and music albums. Many of the songs that won the Golden Song Award enjoyed increased sales, becoming the best-selling songs of the year in Taiwan during the late 1970s.

Xin'ge's business approach was adopted by other Taiwanese record companies, such as Haishan Records (海山唱片). Similar song writing and singing competitions sprang up and

music albums were released. To repackage the music product and boost sales, the music composed by young songwriters was advertised by Haishan Records as folk melodies (民謠), and the Haishan music competitions were named Folk Melody Wind (民謠風). As most of the folk melodies were written by university students, the genre came to be referred to as campus folk songs (校園民歌) or campus songs (校園歌曲) (Moskowitz 2010: 34). The campus folk songs can be seen as an extension of the modern Chinese folk song that Tao Xiaoqing actively supported in the late 1970s. Musically, both the campus folk song and Tao's modern Chinese folk song were similar in format to the modern American folk song at the time.

The Taiwanese campus folk song was characterised by simple, natural singing accompanied by mainly Western instruments, such as the flute, violin, and particularly the acoustic guitar. In addition, the performance style of the campus folk song mimicked the visual presentations of the American folk song performers. The young Taiwanese singers of the campus folk song presented themselves to their audience wearing casual outfits like T-shirts and jeans.

The themes of the campus folk songs varied. In their study of campus folk songs, Jian and Wu find that songs focused on love and relationships make up around half of the songs released before 1980 (Jian and Wu 1981). Unlike the Mandarin pop songs at the time, the songwriters of campus folk songs expressed love and relationships through conservative and poetic images such as the 'wind, moon, and sea' (Moskowitz 2010:35). Another major category of campus folk songs addressed themes of everyday life, and expressed emotional ties to place. A well-known example is 'Grandma's Penghu Bay'<sup>35</sup> (外婆的澎湖灣) (CD website link track

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<sup>35</sup> Pang, Anbang. 2015. *Grandma's Penghu Bay*. CD, LS-7109. Taipei: Haishan Records.

3),<sup>36</sup> composed by Ye Jiaxiu (葉佳修) and sung by Pan Angbang (潘安邦), whose lyrics describe happy childhood memories of Grandma's house on Penghu Bay, a small island that belongs to Taiwan. This song emphasised local roots and local identities.

In other songs in this genre, Chinese national identity was emphasised. One of the best-known and popular songs was 'Descendants of the Dragon'<sup>37</sup> (龍的傳人) (CD website link track 4),<sup>38</sup> composed by Hou Dejian (侯德健) and sung by Li Jianfu (李健復) in Mandarin, first released in 1978. In the following year, the US formally ended its relationship with Taiwan and allied with China. In the aftermath of this incident, young Taiwanese people started consciously to emphasise their Chinese identity, and 'Descendants of the Dragon' became extremely popular.

遙遠的東方有一條江	Far east there is a river
它的名字就叫長江	Its name is the Yangtze River
遙遠的東方有一條河	Far east there is a river
它的名字就叫黃河	Its name is the Yellow River
雖不曾看見長江美	Though I have not seen the beauty of the Yangtze River
夢裡常神遊長江水	In my dreams, frequently I see the water of the Yangtze River
雖不曾聽見黃河壯	Though I have not heard of the Yellow River
澎湃洶湧在夢裡	It flows strongly in my dreams

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<sup>36</sup> wailimppx. 2007. 潘安邦 - 外婆的澎湖灣 [Pan Angbang – 'Grandma's Penghu Bay']. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nj6smOEBd\\_8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nj6smOEBd_8) (accessed on 29 June 2016)

<sup>37</sup> Li Jianfu. 2006. *Descendants of the Dragon*. CD. SP018. Taipei: Rock Records.

<sup>38</sup> ComixRockRecords. 2012. 李建復-龍的傳人 [Li Jianfu - Descendants of the Dragon]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8kLPuBSruc> (accessed on 21 June 2016)

古老的東方有一條龍	The ancient east has a dragon
他的名字就叫中國	Its name is the Great China
古老的東方有一群人	The ancient east has a people
他們全都是龍的傳人	They are all descendants of the dragon
巨龍腳底下我成長	Under the care of the dragon
長成以後是龍的傳人	We grew up to be his descendants
黑眼睛黑頭髮黃皮膚	Black eyes, black hair and yellow skin
永永遠遠是龍的傳人	We are forever the descendants of the dragon
巨龍巨龍你擦亮眼	Dragon, dragon, please open your eyes
永永遠遠的擦亮眼	Forever open your eyes

(Descendants of the Dragon'<sup>39</sup> by Li Jianfu: 1978: my translation)

Following Li's first performance, 'Descendants of the Dragon' was ranked at the top of the charts for fifteen weeks (Zeng 1998: 164). Before 1987, Taiwan portrayed itself as a region of China; in Li's lyrics, the dragon implies the country of China, and that the Taiwanese are the descendants of the great China.

The 'Descendants of the Dragon' is comparable to Yang Xiang's modern Chinese folk song, 'Four Nostalgic Verses', which is a slow, lyrical song, sung in *bel canto* operatic style (美聲唱法). The introduction starts with a guitar that mimics the sounds of a Chinese zither (*guzheng*)<sup>40</sup> and followed by a French horn. The melody is in A minor with a 4/4 rhythmic

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<sup>39</sup> Li Jianfu. 2006. *Descendants of the Dragon*. CD. SP018. Taipei: Rock Records.

<sup>40</sup> *Guzheng* is a Chinese traditional plucked musical string instrument. The modern *guzheng* usually has twenty one strings and is most commonly tuned in a pentatonic scale [D E F# A B] (Matsue 2016: 39).

pattern. Together with the horn, the *bel canto* singing and the backing choir create a heroic sound for the song.

In their study of the relationship between popular culture, consumerism and nationalism, First and Hermann claim that it is often assumed that national identity is constructed officially through “high ... traditional cultural agents” (First and Hermann 2009: 508). However, they argue, popular culture, such as popular goods and everyday products, also plays an important role in constructing nationalism, as these everyday objects are not just “utilities” but are also “communicators” (First and Hermann 2009: 508) in the age of consumerism. They argue that when the nation falls into a state of crisis, popular culture can also be used as a means of ‘healing’ or ‘rehabilitation’ (First and Hermann 2009: 507–8). The producers of popular culture goods often use the familiar verbal, visual and symbolic expressions of nationalism that have already been produced and dispersed by the high culture agents to achieve the healing of the nation. By displaying the nation’s ‘golden age’ of yester-year, which contrasted with the depressive state of the country, people may use these products as paradigms of what they might achieve in the future (First and Hermann 2009: 507–8).

Hou Dejian’s ‘Descendants of the Dragon’ was a popular production, produced when the nation was in a depressed state and in need of restoration and reconstruction. When the US decided to seek rapprochement with the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the island faced a series of diplomatic setbacks. This song achieved widespread popularity in Taiwan by using verbal and symbolic expressions of Chinese nationalism that had already been formed and distributed through the high culture agents, such as education and textbooks. Hou’s ‘The Descendants of the Dragon’ evokes a history of Chinese greatness, and the Taiwanese people heard in these lyrics the possibility of restored greatness in a future without US support. Thus, expressions of Chinese identity are used to critique of America, even as Taiwan lost out in its competition with China for American attention on the political stage.



However, creating powerful expressions of Chinese nationalism was no guarantee of political approval. In 1983, the songwriter Hou Dejian left Taiwan for China, ignoring the KMT government's travel ban; his music, including 'Descendants of the Dragon', was consequently banned in Taiwan (Ma, Tao and Ye 2012: 32–33). A few years later, in 1989, Hou Dejian witnessed the pro-democracy protest by university students in Tiananmen Square, Beijing. With three of his friends, Hou went on a two-day hunger strike in support of the Chinese students (Han and Hua 1990: 349). His participation in this political movement led to his deportation back to Taiwan by the Chinese government in 1990 (Baum 1994: 458).

Following the lifting of martial law in 1987, the power of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) – which strongly emphasised a Taiwan-centred ideology – grew rapidly, and the Chinese Nationalist government was forced to change its political strategy. It promoted Taiwanisation (indigenisation) alongside Chinese cultural hegemony in order to maintain its influence (Chang 2006: 202–203), and Taiwan moved into a new era in which local cultures and traditions were filled with new value (Guy 2005: 5). When the DPP came into power with the presidential election in 2000, the process of Taiwanisation was greatly extended, both politically and culturally (Chang 2006: 202–203).

The political and cultural changes since the 1980s have had a major impact on identity construction in Taiwanese society. In an interview with the *China Times* on 19 November 2004, Li Jianfu, who sang 'Descendants of the Dragon' proclaimed that he would not sing this famous song ever again. He stated:

I am still the person with black eyes, black hair and yellow skin that the lyrics describe; however, after so many years, Taiwan has changed. Although I don't think that this song has any political meaning now, I no longer wish to sing it, and I am sure a lot of people would prefer me not to sing this particular song again either.... To be honest, I think the phenomenal popularity of this song was because it reflected the mood of the nation at that time. In fact, the lyrics may not reflect

Hou Dejian's (the songwriter's) true affection for the country (Ma and Tao 1995: 83; my translation).

Li's statement reveals the extent to which the song 'Descendants of the Dragon' had lost its relevance in contemporary Taiwanese society. With the rapid growth of Taiwanese consciousness, the identity of Taiwan had shifted from Chinese-centric to Taiwan-centred. Such changes also transformed the cultural landscape and popular music industry of Taiwan.

The movement to 'sing our own songs' was popularised by the commercial interests of the music industry in its mid-late phase. In order to boost sales, the music produced by the young songwriters had to suit public tastes. For this reason, campus folk songs began to develop into a style similar to mainstream Mandarin pop, and the nationalist tone of the movement was gradually diluted, at which point the popularity of campus folk songs started to decrease.

## **2.5 Yang Zujun – 'Singing Our Own songs': the Emergence of Taiwanese Consciousness?**

Since its beginnings in 1975, the 'singing our own songs' movement underwent several phases. It started with Yang Xian's music, which was strongly Chinese nationalist in tone. It was followed by Li Shuangze's appeal to Taiwanese youth to 'sing our own songs' which led to a student movement of writing Chinese language songs. While it was seen a great business opportunity to record companies, Yang Zujun decided to take the campus folk songs in a different direction.

When Li Shuangze passed away in 1977, none of his music was being performed in public. Both Yang Zujun and Hu Defu were asked to sing Li's unpublished songs at his funeral. They chose 'The Beautiful Island' (1977) and 'Young China' (1977). Li Shuangze's songs were lyrical and had no obvious political implications. Nevertheless, this was a turning point

for Yang Zujun as she saw Li's music differently. In her biography, Yang noted that singing Li's songs at his funeral inspired her to reconsider the Chinese identity that she had been taught at school.

China and Taiwan, Taiwan and China. I had been taught that Taiwan and China were not the same and could never be the same, but my China was right here and right beside me. I had been looking for a connection between the two and now I finally understand that it is the land that I am standing on and the people on this land. (Yang 1992: 19; my translation)

In 1977–1978, after she graduated from university, Yang Zujun hosted a television programme named *Lively Notes* (跳躍的音符). The main purpose of this programme was to discuss campus folk songs and provide a stage for student singers to perform songs that they had written. *Lively Notes* was popular among university students at the time. Like all other television programmes, it was produced according to government regulations on media broadcasting: patriotic songs and purified songs had to constitute at least 30 per cent of the whole programme. Yang felt that such policies were incompatible with her own views, which led her to resign from her post within a year (Yang 1992: 21–22).

It was while working for the television station that Yang Zujun decided that she would devote herself to social activism. As an educated graduate, she began to champion underprivileged social groups such as labourers and prostitutes through her singing. In 1978, she made her first attempt at organising an outdoor benefit concert, called *Green Grass Field* (青草地歌謠慈善演唱會), to raise funds to help young prostitutes (Yang 1992: 23–24). Yang invited mainly student campus folk song singers, such as Wu Chuchu (吳楚楚) and Mao Zhulun (毛鑄倫), to perform at the concert. The concert poster proclaimed: Come and Sing the Chinese People's Own Songs! (來唱中國人自己的歌!). The songs performed at *Green Grass Field* varied in style, including English pop songs, campus folk songs, a Taiwanese language folk song 'Dark Sky' (天黑黑) and classic Taiwanese pop songs, such as 'Mending a Broken

Fishing Net’ (補破網), which was composed by Taiwanese songwriter Wang Yunfeng (王雲峰), with lyrics by Li Lingqiu (李臨秋), in 1948. As described in Chapter 1, both Wang and Li were well-known musicians who wrote the first Taiwanese pop songs ‘Peach Blossom Weeps Blood’ (桃花泣血記) (1933) and ‘Longing for the Spring Breeze’ (望春風) (1933) during the Japanese colonisation period. The song ‘Mending a Broken Fishing Net’ had been banned by the authorities since the late 1950s on the grounds that its melancholic style implied criticism of the government. : Performance of this song was only permitted again in 1977. The concert ended with Yang Zujun singing Li Shuangze’s ‘The Beautiful Island’ and ‘The Old Drummer’.



Figure 2.3 Poster of the *Green Grass Field* Concert

(<https://www.tumblr.com/search/楊祖珩>, accessed on 21/06/2016)

In addition to invoking people’s awareness of underprivileged groups in society, the *Green Grass Field* concert was also seen by Yang Zujun as an opportunity to promote campus folk songs composed by young Taiwanese musicians (Yang 1978). These campus folk songs aimed to elicit Taiwanese people’s love of their land and to highlight national consciousness (Yang 1992: 23–24). The late 1970s was the period when campus folk songs were already

being widely embraced in Taiwanese society, and the performers whom Yang invited to sing at the concert were well-known among university students. The popular music and well-known singers helped to publicise the concern, which was the largest outdoor event at the time, with more than 5000 people attending (Yang 1992: 23). The next day, it received positive feedback from the newspapers, which praised the significance of the concert. The media also praised the young, educated people for becoming involved in these social issues (Yang 1992: 24).

Nevertheless, as the concert of *Green Grass Field* engaged with social problems, its success attracted the authorities' attention and suspicion. Yang was warned by a friend, Mao Zhulun, who was also at the *Green Grass Field Concert*, about her 'left-wing actions' (Yang 1992: 24). She risked being accused of promoting social activism, which was strictly forbidden during the martial law period. Although Yang insisted that she had only tried to make Taiwanese people more aware of social issues and care about underprivileged social groups, the event did cause complications for her later (Yang 1992: 22–24).

A year after the concert, in 1979, Yang Zujun released her first album, entitled *Yang Zujun* (楊祖珺), containing Li Shuangze's 1977 songs. The censors restricted the broadcasting of the album less than two months after it was released. With the exception of 'The Beautiful Island' all of the songs on the album were restricted, as the authorities were concerned that a pro-China (pro-Communist) sentiment was being conveyed through the music (Yang 2008). Moreover, although the recording of the song 'The Beautiful Island' was allowed, it could not be played on television or radio. The *Yang Zujun* album was removed from the market but not before nearly 10,000 copies had been sold (Yang 1992: 31; 2008).

Although it was never made clear why Li's music was considered pro-China and banned (Yang 1992: 31), this could be explained by the Taiwanese *xiangtu* nativist literature (鄉土文學) movement of the 1970s. In the *xiangtu* literature, writers used the Taiwanese dialect (Taiyu)

to produce a highly aestheticized and introspective style of literature (Harrison 2009: 132). *Xiangtu* literature was a description of Taiwanese rural life, and its writers focused on working class small-town people, who often lived with financial difficulties (Harrison 2009: 132–133).

Even though its writers claimed it was apolitical, the movement was interpreted otherwise by other groups of Taiwanese writers and led to various political debates. On the one hand, the way *xiangtu* literature emphasised local Taiwanese people was seen as an expression of political struggle or an attempt to disseminate Taiwanese localism in opposition to Chinese nationalism. On the other hand, the movement was associated with ‘Worker-Peasant-Soldier’ literature encouraged in revolutionary China (Harrison 2009: 130–133). Either way, the *xiangtu* literature movement was seen a threat to the KMT government and it was consequently brought to an end in the late 1970s.

It is likely that Li Shengze’s songs, which focused on the common people of Taiwan, were seen as a part of the *xiangtu* literature movement. Song lyrics like ‘I Know’, included people of various social classes, such as farmers, fishermen and workers who were less privileged in society, and therefore it was banned. Li’s ‘The Beautiful Island’ was the only song that was not completely prohibited at the time. Looking at the song text of ‘The Beautiful Island’ (see 2.2 in this chapter), we can see that it was a direct description of Taiwanese island which might not entirely fit into the KMT’s ideological framework. For this reason, I argue that the ban on Li’s music was not entirely a problem with the songs, it also related to the performer, Yang Zujun, and her potential left-wing intentions.

As Li Shuangze’s music was not approved by the government censor, his songs could not be recorded or broadcast. Nevertheless, Yang Zujun was determined to bring Li Shuangze’s songs to the Taiwanese people. She started to organise concerts in different venues, including university campuses, factories, cultural centres and private companies (Zhang 2003: 150–153)

so that Li's music could be accessed by people from different social backgrounds. The songs that Yang selected for concerts varied in style. They including Taiwanese language songs, Hakka and Aboriginal folk songs, and campus folk songs, and Li Shuangze's songs would always be sung at the end of each concert.

Zhang Zhaowei notes that Yang did not organise her performance lists randomly. She selected songs and adjusted the lists according to the audience and their life experience in order to boost their persuasive power. For example, when concerts were performed in a factory, she often chose 'The Wish of a Young Woman' (孤女的願望) (1961), the melody of which is based on a popular Japanese song 'Hanagasa Dōchū' (花笠道中). The song 'Hanagasa Dōchū' was first performed and released by a well-known Japanese singer, Hibari Misora, in 1957. The Taiwanese lyrics of the song were written by a Taiwanese songwriter, Ye Junlin (葉俊麟) and released in 1961. They concern a poor young woman who is forced to leave her family in the countryside to go and work in a factory in Taipei (Zeng 1998: 96–97). At the end of every concert that Yang Zujun organised, she always presented Li's music, attempting to create a utopian image of a happy and hopeful Taiwanese society (Zhang 2003: 152).

Through resigning from the television company and organising concerts to sing 'forbidden' songs, Yang Zujun displayed her resistance to the KMT authorities. Furthermore, she began to become actively involved in political opposition from late 1978. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the main domestic challenges were posed by the Non-Party Democratic Movement (黨外民主運動). Although organised opposition was still not allowed, independent activists and organisations began to join opponents of the KMT in a loose grouping (Hughes 1997: 38). Yang Zujun at the time was closely connected with social and political activists, such as Wang Tuo (王拓), a Taiwanese nativist writer, whose best-known novel, *Auntie Jinshui* (金水孀), was published in 1976.

Like the rest of Wang Tuo's writing, *Auntie Jinshui* focuses on the lives of working class people. In 1978, Wang Tuo stood for election to the Taiwanese National Assembly. Admiration for Wang Tuo's writing and his notions about people from a disadvantaged background motivated Yang Zujun to work as a volunteer for Wang during his electoral campaign. Yang sang songs including 'Mending a Broken Fishing Net' (補破網) (1948) at Wang's public presentations (Yang 1992: 25–26). This direct participation in non-party activities made Yang Zujun appear even more suspect, and the KMT government started to consider her 'a person with a problematic mind set' (思想有問題的人) (Zhang 2003:154; Yang 2008).

In 1979, opposition activists established a magazine association named *Meilidao* (*Formosa*) Magazine (美麗島雜誌), that promoted a democratic society and the ending of martial law (McGowin 2011: 113). The name of the association was inspired by Li Shuangze's song, 'The Beautiful Island' (Zeng 1998: 157; Yang 2008). Through the establishment of the magazine, the association became an illegitimate political organisation, and was constantly disrupted by the ruling government. Li Shuangze's 'The Beautiful Island' became a symbol of resistance because of its association with the political activism of the *Formosa Magazine*. Nevertheless, the song was not embraced by all members of the opposition, due to its use of Mandarin. During interview with *China Times* in 2012, Yang Zujun told the newspaper that her singing was sometimes disrupted by Non-party supporters, who described it as a "pig's song" (豬仔歌).<sup>41</sup>

Since the KMT's retreat to Taiwan in 1949, social and political tensions created a new social division: the Mainlanders (外省人) and the native Taiwanese (本省人) (Song 2009: 128). Mainlanders were people who arrived in Taiwan with the KMT's retreat in 1949, while the

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<sup>41</sup> Chen, Yu-sheng. 2012. 'Yang Zujun Supports Lin Zhenjie's Political Campaign'. *China Times*. 13 January 2012.



ancestors of the native Taiwanese settled on the island long before the end of Second World War. Various cultural aspects distinguish the two groups, as well as language differences, with the use of Mandarin or Taiyu being among the most recognisable. Mandarin language was associated with Chinese Mainlanders, who in general, had higher education level and were part of high culture. The majority of Mainlanders supported Chinese nationalism. Taiyu, on the other hand, was associated with native Taiwanese people who typically had a lower educational level and were less well-off (Chang 2003: 49).

The word ‘pig’ comes from a popular saying in Taiwan: the dogs (Japanese) left but the pigs (the Mainlanders) came (Song 2009: 128). The idea was that while ‘dogs’, which represent the Japanese, were fearsome they could at least guard the house, but ‘pigs’ did nothing, and were merely lazy (Roy 2003: 62; Song 2009: 128). The saying implied that the Mainlanders were invaders who enjoyed the fruits of the native Taiwanese’s achievements. The songs of Li Shuangze were used to signify opposition by Yang Zujun. However, because of the use of the Mandarin which was linked with Mainlanders and Chinese nationalism, it was rejected by some of the Taiwanese opposition.

On 10 December 1979, a rally calling for human rights was led by non-party activists in Kaohsiung, the second largest city in southern Taiwan. The demonstration turned into a riot, resulting in the arrest and imprisonment of a large number of leaders and members, and became known as the Kaohsiung Incident (高雄事件) or the Formosan Incident (美麗島事件) (McGowin 2011: 113). Activists who were arrested and imprisoned at that time included Wang Tuo, whom Yang Zujun supported, as well as individuals who later become Taiwanese politicians. One of the best-known imprisoned activists was the Vice President (2000-2008), Annette Lu Hsiu-lien (呂秀蓮).

Yang Zujun did not directly participate in the Formosa Incident. However, in 1981, less than two years after it, she released an album called *Non-Party Voices and Newly Birthed Songs* (黨外的聲音與新生的歌謠), indicating her solidarity with the political opposition (Yang 1992: 188–191). Yang’s album was divided into two parts according to language. For the Non-Party Voices part, Yang presented Taiwanese language songs, such as ‘Mending a Broken Fishing Net’ (補破網) (1948) and ‘Hoping You Come Home Soon’ (望你早歸) (1946), both of which were composed in the late 1940s and had been banned by the KMT authorities. The Newly Birthed Songs part included Li Shuangze’s songs in Chinese, such as ‘I Know’ (我知道) (1977) and ‘Young China’ (少年中國) (1977), both of which were also banned from public performance. In addition to the music, the album contained a short, spoken introduction prior to each song, written by a Taiwanese nativist writer named Chen Yingzhen (陳映真). The following short paragraph in Mandarin precedes the Taiwanese song, ‘Hoping You Come Home Soon’:

Our beloved and respected friends have become criminals overnight. Friends! Do you remember how they walked so full of life towards the court? Do you remember the sincerity with which they spoke every word? Do you remember their tears of sadness, forgiveness and love? But with gritted teeth we suffer the verdict alongside them; we fight back our tears, patiently waiting for their return. (Yang 1992: 190; my translation).

The lyrics of ‘Hoping You Come Home Soon’ ostensibly describe the arrests and aftermath of the Formosa Incident, and both the song and its spoken introduction constitute a direct statement of unity with the protestors (Yang 1992: 189–190).

Since the late 1970s, Yang actively participated in the Taiwanese opposition. In 1983 she became a candidate of councillor of Taipei city election. Yang believed that music and songs could help to create a national consciousness and identity (民族意識與鄉土認同) (Yang 1992:

192), so singing was an important element of her election campaign.<sup>42</sup> In her biography, Yang recalls that after each speech or presentation of her political views, she ended with both Li Shuangze's music and Taiwanese language songs (Zhang 2003: 155). In addition, she adapted songs by the Taiwanese rock singer, Luo Dayou, such as 'The Orphan of Asia' (亞細亞的孤兒) (1983) and 'Pedantry' (之乎者也) (1982). She rewrote the lyrics of Luo's 'Pedantry' and renamed it 'Taiwanese Pedantry' (台灣之乎者也).<sup>43</sup> Her new version sharply and directly criticised the KMT government on issues such as bureaucracy and the lack of freedom of speech and constant changes to political policies, and urged her listeners:

現在聽聽我們的政府 他們在說什麼	Now listen to our government
	regarding what they want to say
但是你要想想 到底你要他們怎麼做	But you also have to think about
	what you want them to do

('Taiwanese Pedantry'<sup>44</sup> by Young Zujun: 2008; my translation)

'Taiwanese Pedantry' demonstrated Yang's attempt to challenge the political status quo through the medium of song. It was officially recorded for the first time for Yang's latest album, *A Voice that Could Not Be Silenced* (關不住的歌聲), which was released in 2008. However, the openness of the political criticism aimed at the KMT authorities in Yang's version was opposed by Luo Dayou, the original composer of the song, so in place of the song on her album, Yang left a symbolic silent gap of 3 minutes 42 seconds (Yang 2008).

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<sup>42</sup> Yang failed the attempt to be elected as a councillor of Taipei city.

<sup>43</sup> Yang, Zujun. 2008. *A Voice That Could Not Be Silenced- The tc yang Collection 1977-2003* [CD liner notes]. TMCD347. Tree Music.

<sup>44</sup> Yang, Zujun. 2008. *A Voice That Could Not Be Silenced- The TC Yang Collection 1977-2003*. CD. TMCD347. Taipei: Tree Music.

Yang went on to become one of the founders of the DPP in 1986, and she campaigned for Judicial Review and Women's Rights (Yang 1992: 170–183; 328–345). More importantly Yang was one of the vital DPP members who promoted the Mainlander Return Home Movement (外省人返鄉探親運動), which sought permission for Chinese Mainlanders in Taiwan to be able to visit China after nearly forty years of separation from their families (Yang 1992: 154–170). In 1988, Chinese Mainlanders were allowed to travel to China. In 1994 Yang left the DPP.

## **Conclusion**

The campus folk song movement was undoubtedly one of the most significant musical movements in modern Taiwanese history, and contributed significantly to the construction of a Taiwanese national identity in the 1970s. The movement arose during a time when the island was experiencing a decline in international status. To respond to the changing political environment, and protest against America's domination of the island's political sphere and popular music and culture, the young Taiwanese elite were encouraged to express their national identity through music-making.

The 'singing our own songs' movement underwent several phases. Yang Xian's music was nationalistic in tone. The poetic Chinese lyrics and Chinese musical instrumentation were adopted to emphasise the Chinese aspect of Taiwanese identity, one that differentiated it from the West. Although Yang's music did not gain widespread fame immediately, his idea of 'writing and singing our own songs' became the spirit of the well-known campus folk song movement.

'Chinese consciousness' appealed to Taiwanese society in the late 1970s, when a sense of belonging was desired during a time of political turbulence. The songwriters and performers

of campus folk songs believed that they were constructing a national identity through music, even though, musically, these songs revealed few traces of either a local Taiwanese or a Chinese style. Instead, the musical genre of the campus folk song developed from models of American popular music, perhaps ironically, since the young elite deliberately set out to position themselves against America. How did the sounds of Western pop map onto a Taiwanese identity? And how was the music of the ‘other’ transformed into ‘ours’ to become a successful symbol of identity in the 1970s?

Bhabha’s suggestion that “Colonial mimicry is the desire for the reformed, recognisable other” (Bhabha 1994: 122) provides a ready explanation for the mimicry of Western pop in Taiwanese society by the young elite. The songwriters of campus folk songs negotiated their expressions of identity by indigenising their music through the incorporation of Chinese musical instruments and Chinese lyrics. However, the hegemony of American popular culture remained to the fore, and the American folk music revival of the 1960s and 1970s provided an equally strong musical model for the Taiwanese campus songs, as did the modernised folk songs of the PRC. In Taiwan, just as in America and China, the term ‘folk song’ was applied very loosely in musical terms. Its use provoked debates about authenticity, just as in America and China, but these debates did not impede its value as a signifier of national identity.

Campus folk song was not promoted directly by the authorities; however, consumerism and nationalism were closely linked and the government played an important role in developing such music. During the early 1970s, local Mandarin and Taiwanese language pop were firmly controlled by the KMT authorities, and Western popular music was therefore promoted because of the restrictions on local Taiwanese pop. Furthermore, campus folk song was produced within the framework of government political ideology and its tight control over the contexts of musical performance developed within a controlled society in which Chinese nationalist ideology was widely imposed.

However, the campus folk songs, which were nationalist in tone, were re-signified and redeployed as an act of resistance by Yang Zujun. In his study of cultural expression and grassroots development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Kleymeyer notes that, “democratic discourse is lacking in many societies. Frequently, the disadvantaged are kept at the margins of political participation and public debate” (Kleymeyer 1994: 29). When society reaches this state, he believes that “people turn to various forms of cultural expression - frequently popular songs and humour, to make their opinions known and to protest injustices” (Kleymeyer 1994: 29). In the context of Taiwan, active public protests against the KMT were outlawed under the strict control of the authorities during the martial law period. Yang Zujun attempted to change the status quo through cultural expression: singing songs that aimed to encourage critical thinking among her listeners.

Yang Zujun drew on campus folk songs in her acts of resistance to the KMT authorities. The apolitical songs of Li Shuangze, borrowed by Yang, acted as a coded music to subtly promote her political aims. Li’s music was therefore considered a threat by the government, and was restricted before the lifting of martial law. An act of state censorship, however, may give political value to apolitical music and turn it into a potential symbol of protest (Street 2006: 50–51).

A similar account is offered by Nooshin in her study of Iranian pop music and national identity between the late 1970s and late 1990s. Nooshin discusses how the Iranian government made popular music illegal after the revolution of 1979, in order to reject Western cultural, political and economic hegemony. (Nooshin 2005: 237). However, by banning pop music the government effectively gave it a subversive power, even if the songs were not intrinsically subversive or challenging (Nooshin 2005: 243). In Taiwan, Yang Zujun’s performance of songs which were censored was an act of resistance in itself.

In his study of changes of Taiwan's political landscape, Jacobs notes that in current Taiwanese society, the term 'Taiwanisation' "emphasises identification with Taiwan, consciousness of Taiwan and even a Taiwanese nationalism" (Jacobs 2012:6). However, he claims that politically the process of 'Taiwanisation' had not been developed when the Non-Party formed a democratic movement in the late 1970s. In his analysis of articles in *Meilidao* Magazine published by Non-Party members in the late 1970s, he notes that the key political issue that the Non-Party movement aimed to promote was democracy, while the issue of 'Taiwanisation' received almost no attention at that time (Jacobs 2005: 22).

In his book *Democratizing Taiwan*, Jacobs explains that the democratic movement in Taiwan and 'Taiwanisation' were closely linked but not the same thing. Before the 1980s the Nationalist Mainlanders consisted of only around 15 per cent of the population but controlled the majority of the resources and political power. In this situation, appeals to Taiwanese identity provided an important attraction to and source of strength for the opposition (Jacobs 2012: 6). Jacobs also emphasises that not all the supporters of the democratic movement favoured a separate Taiwan and this led to splits in the movement for democracy (Jacobs 2012: 6)

Although it is not easy to prove that Yang Zujun intentionally used music to serve the function of crafting a Taiwanese national identity or Taiwanese nationalism, I argue that she adopted music not only attempted to demonstrate her resistance under the conditions of authoritarianism, but also used music to push the politics of reconciliation. In the context of Taiwan, the language used for song lyrics is one of the most symbolic and direct ways to express one's Taiwanese or Chinese identity. As Mandarin represented the national language of China during KMT rule, the authorities made efforts to maintain its dominant position in the language hierarchy in Taiwan (Kloter 2009: 106). While campus folk songs written in the Chinese language represented a form of Chinese identity, Yang Zujun mixed Taiwanese

language songs into her performance. Moreover, to emphasis sentimental attachment to the island of Taiwan, she borrowed Li Shuangze's songs that focus on Taiwanese nostalgia. In this way she urged Taiwanese people who shared the beautiful island to stand together as a whole and fought for democracy together.

This chapter demonstrates on the complexity and shifting way that the same songs could signify different forms of identity in different contexts and at different times in the rapidly changing political environment. It also reflects the complexity of the evolving national identity in Taiwan, sometimes being Chinese in opposition to America, or being Taiwanese in opposition to the KMT, but also building a sense of identification with the place of Taiwan through the medium of Chinese language song.



### **Chapter 3: Our Land and Our Songs: Local Activism and the Folk-Pop of Lin Sheng Xiang (林生祥)**

On 20 May 2016, Tsai Ing-wen was sworn in as the new President of Taiwan, becoming its first female leader. The shift of power to Tsai also marked the beginning of the third period of rule by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in Taiwanese political history. During the inaugural ceremony, a series of performances were presented to both home and foreign audiences, emphasising the history and democratic development of Taiwan. Through dance performances, music, and singing, the ceremony aimed to show how people in Taiwan from all kinds of different ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds had struggled together for democracy and freedom for the island they call home, and laid the groundwork for the democracy that Taiwanese are able to enjoy today.

To form Taiwan's identity as a democratic and multicultural society, past historical events including major protests, demonstrations and movements which had been taken place since the 1980s were stressed and adopted as symbols of democracy by Tsai's government during her inaugural ceremony. The idea of a democratic society was expressed through popular music singing under the theme of 'The March of Democracy' (民主進行曲). Three performers were invited to sing for the ceremony. In addition to the Golden Melody Award winner: Hakka singer Lin Sheng Xiang (林生祥), the aboriginal performer Panai Kusui (巴奈·庫穗), and the indie band Fire EX (滅火器) were also invited to perform. Among the programme were six songs sung in four languages: Mandarin, Taiyu, Amis and Hakka. Each song represented an important event on Taiwan's road to democracy. All three performers had previously been involved in various social movements and protests. This ceremony highlighted the importance of popular music and musicians in helping shaping a collective identity through

the social movements that gripped Taiwanese society in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

In this chapter I explore various ways in which Taiwanese popular music has been deployed as an act of resistance, and how such acts of resistance have assisted in the construction of a collective identity for Taiwan. I use the music album of Lin Sheng Xiang named *Let's Sing Mountain Songs* <sup>45</sup>(我等就來唱山歌) (CD website link track 5),<sup>46</sup> as a case study. Lin is known as a Hakka songwriter, a music performer as well as an environmental activist. He involved himself, through his writing and performing, in many environmental movements including the Meinong Anti-Dam Movement (美濃反水庫運動), and more recently in an on-going protest against a state-run oil refinery. *Let's Sing Mountain Songs* is a music album that was produced by Lin's band, Labour Exchange (交工樂隊) to support the Meinong Anti-Dam Movement that took place in Taiwan during 1991–2003.

In their edited volume, *Pieces of the Musical World*, Harris and Pease (2015) give an overview of ethnomusicological approaches to music and place. They note that music is part of soundscape, which along with other sounds plays an important role in forming a sense of place and identity. Songs, sounds and musical phrases evoke the personal and collective memories and feeling associated with particular places. These qualities forge the links between music, place and identity that make music deeply political. If music-making and listening practices form a part of the way in which people order the world, they also contribute to the ways we think about and evoke the natural environment.

Ethnomusicologists, such as Steven Feld (1996) and Tina Ramnarine (2009), have explored the relationships between music, nature and culture, and argue that we need to

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<sup>45</sup> Labour Exchange. 1999. *Let's Sing Mountain Songs*. CD.TMCD-310. Taipei: Tree Music.

<sup>46</sup> Y.Y. Vincent Chang. 2010. 我等就來唱山歌-交工樂隊 [Labour Exchange. *Let's Sing Mountain Songs*]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oA4h-1IuJ6Q> (accessed on 16 June 2016)

understand human musical expression as part of sonic ecosystem. Music is not just a way of mediating between people and their environment; it is an enactment of the environment in which humans are a part. However, in our contemporary globalised world, our lived experiences are rarely confined to the physical locations which we inhabit, and the resulting sense of dislocation leads people to find ways of relocating themselves, perhaps through roots-seeking or nostalgia.

In Taiwan, agriculture has served as a strong groundwork for Taiwan's economic development. Even though only about a quarter of its land is suitable for agricultural use, since the post-war period, the government has proclaimed a long-term plan for the country of "developing industry through agriculture, and developing agriculture through industry" (Kuo and Yu 2015: 11). In the rural areas, most residents obtain their income from farming, and they rely heavily on the land and natural resources to support their agriculture. The district of Meinong (美濃), where the songwriter Lin Sheng Xiang was born, is a typical Taiwanese rural community.

In 1992 the government announced its plans to construct a dam in Meinong District to sustain the water supply for southern areas of Taiwan. On one level, Lin's music identifies the environmental problems that Taiwan faces, giving a voice to the community, and speaking out for the lower classes, however, if we look closely at his music, we can see that Lin's local activism also forms a sense of place and a sense of national identity by focusing on ties to the land to articulate a Taiwanese consciousness.

Lin's music is a style of popular music, fusing local elements, such as traditional Taiwanese music instruments, Hakka mountain songs, and the sounds of the surrounding environment (people talking, noise of motorcycles and tractors from the farm) with the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic structures of Western popular music. By using many cultural symbols,

including language, traditional singing and instrumentation, Lin creates the soundscape of his rural hometown, and links his music directly to the land. I consider the following questions: as the movement for Taiwanisation (本土化) has become significant for the development of Taiwanese consciousness, what role does Lin's music play in the movement, and how is Taiwanese identity revealed in the songs?

### **3.1 Lin Sheng Xiang and the Beginning of Environmentalism**

Lin Sheng Xiang (b. 1971) was born and brought up in Meinong (美濃), which is a large Hakka agricultural community in rural southern Taiwan. The village of Meinong consisted of approximately 40,000 people at the end of 2015. Like most of the residents in Meinong, both of Lin's parents are farmers who raise pigs and grow vegetables to support their family. Lin left Meinong for high school in the city of Tainan in 1988. During his life as a high school student, Lin started to work as a singer at local restaurants and pubs performing cover songs.

In 1992, Lin became a student at Tamkang University (淡江大學) where he formed his first rock band called The Music Den of Guanzi (觀子音樂坑). During his university life, Lin lived in Danshui district of Taipei, which is surrounded by the Danshui River and Guanyin Mountain. The scenes of the area inspired Lin in the naming of his band. The name Guanzi was a short form of 'the children under Guanyin Mountain' (觀音山下的孩子). The band consisted of four members – all of them were university students who played the guitar, bass and drums.

The band Guanzi was a student rock band. Nevertheless, the thought of "using music as a tool to communicate" (Lin Sheng Xiang, interview, 05 November 2005, Danshui) political ideas had developed in Lin. During his study at university, Lin began to support the Meinong

Anti-Dam movement, which was then taken place in Lin's hometown, Meinong. This decade-long social movement was sparked when the authorities planned a dam building project in Meinong in 1992. Although the construction of a dam would have significant short-term economic benefits, the local residents of Meinong worried that there would also be negative influence on the surrounding environment and ecosystem (Shi and Luo 2012: 81).

Furthermore, beside the environmental issues, the dam building project also demonstrated the imbalanced social distribution of benefits. While the dominant groups had access to the majority of the dam's economic benefits, the underprivileged had to shoulder the by-products of the construction, which included the loss of natural resources, economic benefits, and cultural and ecological diversity (Shi and Luo 2012: 81–106). The Anti-Dam movement was formed by not only local inhabitants but also young elites who were originally from Meinong. In 1993, some neighbouring indigenous communities also joined in the movement (Zhong 2011: 51) and together they formed the Meinong Aixiang (Love the Land) Progress Association (美濃愛鄉協進會).

The aims of the association were to promote local culture and history, and to protect the environment and natural resources of the Meinong area (Zhong 2011: 52–53). Lin Sheng Xiang was inspired by the people of Meinong, especially those young elite who returned to their rural hometown to live and to support the local community. To support the protest movement, Lin led his band to raise funds for the Meinong Aixiang Progress Association by organising and performing a concert at Tamkang University in 1994. A numbers of gigs were also held across Taiwan over the next few years to promote and to assist the Meinong Anti-Dam movement.

During the period of six years from 1992 until 1998, Lin's Music Den of Guanzi produced two albums: *Chatting in the village* (過庄尋聊) in 1997, and *Wandering Around the*

*Beautiful Island* (遊蕩美麗島) in 1998. The musical style of these two albums was rock based, and the themes of the songs texts focused on the Danshui River as well as the mountains, the land, and life in the farming community of Meinong. All songs were sung in a mixture of multiple languages including Taiyu, Hakka and Mandarin. In 1998 the band held a tour around Taiwan to promote their second album *Wandering Around the Beautiful Island*. As the title of the record suggested, the “beautiful island” (Formosa) was the centre of the theme for this tour.

The band attempted to raise awareness of the environmental issues that were closely connected to the “beautiful island” that Taiwanese people lived in through their music. About half of the songs on this album carried an ecological message (Guy 2009: 238). Taking the song ‘My Danshui River’ (我的淡水河) (1998) as an example, the song texts took the form of a confession to Danshui River which used to be one of the key settlements of Chinese immigrants (Guy 2009: 221). The Danshui River was used to be a vital river with picturesque scenery and a rich cultural history. Along with Taiwan’s economic development and industrialisation came distressing environmental degradation, and the Danshui River became an open sewer (Guy 2009: 221-222). In the song ‘My Danshui River’ Lin asked forgiveness from the river for the mistakes that Taiwanese people had made in the past. Moreover, it also projected a better future for the Danshui River, hoping it would become an attractive place again. At the end of the song, Lin asked the river to “bless the city”.<sup>47</sup>

For the album *Wandering Around the Beautiful Island*, Lin Sheng Xiang used expressive voice and lyrical melody to address his concerns about the environment. A large part of the concert tour that he held in 1988 was in association with various environmental protest movements. Taking the concert held in Danshui as an example, the performance was staged in

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<sup>47</sup> The lyrics of the song ‘My Danshui River’ was written by Zhong, Chenhu (鍾成虎) in 1998. Zhong was also a band member of The Music Den of Guanzi.

conjunction with a number of environmental agencies including the Saving Danshui River Alliance (搶救淡水河行動聯盟).

The Music Den of Guanzi was formed during a time when Taiwanese independent music was flourishing (I will explore this topic further in Chapter 5). Through gigs at music festivals and DIY record selling, the band was able to maintain itself financially. According to Lin (Lin Sheng Xiang, interview, 05 November 2005, Danshui) about 2000 copies released for the first album and the second was only 1000 copies more. Both albums were not recorded in a studio but during their live concerts. “Apart from these two records, I don’t think you can find another musical album in the market that is totally not being edited or altered before released.” Lin said to me during an interview held in 2005. “The band was on a very tight budget and it was the best we could do with the limited resources and facilities we had”. I was told that the majority of the profit gained from record sales was donated to the Meinong Aixiang Progress Association (Lin Sheng Xiang, interview, 05 November 2005, Danshui).

The Music Den of Guanzi was disbanded in 1998 after Lin graduated from university and some of the members of the band had to leave for national service. During the six-year period preceding this, Lin Sheng Xiang started to discuss social issues, and especially the discourse of environmental crisis, from the viewpoint of a young intellectual. This process of developing a political consciousness helped to pave the way for the protest music that Lin composed later.

### **3.2 Labour Exchange – Let’s Sing Mountain Songs**

Through the Meinong Anti-Dam movement, Lin Sheng Xiang had become a friend with Zhong Yong Feng (鍾永豐), who was one of the leading figures of the movement, and later become the major lyric writer of Lin’s bands. Zhong was also of Hakka descent, and was one of the

very few young people who returned to Meinong after completing their studies at university. In 1991, Zhong and his sister Zhong Xio Mei (鍾秀梅), who was also a university graduate, worked for the government doing business surveys in the rural areas surrounding Meinong.

At the time Zhong and his sister, together with their colleague name Li Yupei (李允斐) started to make records and write about the local culture of Meinong. Some of their writing was published in the *Taiwan Times* (台灣時報) under the pen name of The Seventh Working Station (第七小組工作站). In both 1991 and 1992, the three held Hakka themed summer camps and established Hakka culture societies at Taiwan University; both aimed to preserve and promote Hakka culture.

A year after Zhong Yong Feng returned to his hometown, the government published the plan for the dam building in Meinong. With other local residents, journalists and politicians, the members The Seventh Working Station formed the Meinong Aixiang Progress Association that opposed the authorities' proposal in order to protect the environment and the culture of Meinong. Zhong then spent two years in the United States to study for his Masters degree in Sociology during the time when the Meinong Anti-Dam movement was still an ongoing protest. He returned to Taiwan in 1996, and began to work as executive secretary of the Meinong Aixiang Progress Association. During his study in America, he started to consider the possibility of involving musical performance in the protest movement in his hometown. During an interview with Chiu, a Master's degree student at the time, Zhong expressed his thoughts:

I had been thinking, was there anything that was powerful enough to distribute to our movement even further? Just like when someone sang the song 'We Shall Overcome' during the Civil Rights Movement (of America) in the 1960s. The power of protest would be generated through music and one day it would become as powerful as an atomic bomb. (Chiu 2006: 50; my translation)



Zhong Yong Feng thought of Lin Sheng Xiang, whom he had met a few years before. Under the persuasion of Zhong, the following year in 1998, Lin decided to return to Meinong to join Zhong and to devote himself fully to the Anti-Dam Movement. As a musician, Lin felt he could contribute to the movement best by writing songs, and his second band named Labour Exchange Band (交工樂隊) was consequently formed. The name of the band was inspired the system of labour exchange that local Hakka peasants use. During the busy farming and harvesting seasons, local farmers would work as a group and form a communal 'labour bank' to help each other. The concept and the spirit of the co-operating system<sup>w</sup> kept by the band. Labour Exchange consisted of five members including Lin Sheng Xiang who acted as a composer, lead vocalist, guitarist and played *yueqin* (moon lute); Chen Guan Yu (陳冠宇) who played bass, and Zhong Cheng Da (鐘成達) the percussionist. In addition, a Singaporean musician named Guo Jin Chai (郭進財) played *suona* (the Chinese shawm), and Zhong Yong Feng became the main lyric writer of Labour Exchange.

Just under a year after the band was formed, in 1999, Labour Exchange released its first album named *Let's Sing Mountain Songs* (我等就來唱山歌). This album can be described as an audio historical record of the Meinong Anti-Dam Movement (Zhang 2003: 266). The album consists of eight songs. Lin Sheng Xiang starts the album with an introduction to the migration history of the Hakka people to Meinong.

The song 'The Hatamsui River Has Been Writing Our Genealogy' (下淡水河寫著我等界族譜) describes how their Hakka ancestors went through dangers and hazards and finally arrived in Meinong where it was still bleak and desolate. However, the hardworking Hakka people gradually developed the place where it becomes home and roots for their next generation. Lin's song reveals a close attachment of the Hakka people to the land and the river that they relied on to survive. In his music, he incorporated the last part of the inscription on

the foundation stone (瀾濃庄開基碑文末段) that Hakka ancestors engraved when they first arrived Meinong in 1736 (Li 1997: 19):

我等同心誠意 祭告山川 懇祈上蒼 佑此土可大 亦因可久

We perform this rite to make offerings to the mountain and the river with sincerity.  
We pray that the land will be blessed until time without end

(‘The Hatamsui River Has Been Writing Our Genealogy’<sup>48</sup> by Labour Exchange: 1999; my translation’)

With the second song, Lin turned the clock back to the early 1990s when the Anti-Dam Movement began. In 1993, in order to protect their hometown from being flooded due to the construction of the dam, more than two hundred peasants travelled overnight on four buses from Meinong to the Legislative Yuan in the capital city of Taipei and formed a demonstration. The song named ‘Night Buses’ (夜行巴士) sketched the inner thoughts of an old Meinong farmer at the moment when he was on a night bus with his fellow villagers to join the rally:

在都市項食頭路介老弟同涯講 麼該做水庫美濃就變做大金庫

哀哉！涯講後生慙狗望愛食羊下卵呢咩？

厥兜政府斷真系有搞 耕田人家早有出頭

毋使等到涯亦下已經六十出頭 轉業忒慢死忒早 轉業忒慢死又還忒早

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<sup>48</sup> Labour Exchange. 1999. *Let's Sing Mountain Songs*. CD.TMCD-310. Taipei: Tree Music.

My young brothers who work in city told me that Meinong would be turned into a big gold mine if the dam is built. Well, who knows? But, young men, are you stupid dogs who would be convinced to eat sheep's testicles? If the government is really that capable, we poor farmers would have long led a better life. I have struggled hard till my age of sixty, too old for a career change, but too young to die.

(‘Night Buses’<sup>49</sup> by Labour Exchange: 1999; my translation)

The song ‘Night Buses’ pins down a number of social issues. The industrialisation and modernisation of Taiwan resulted in an exodus from the rural areas to the cities. The people who were left in the rural areas were mainly older farmers. The lyrics showed the distrust of the government and also criticised the authorities’ ignorance of the ageing population. In addition, the song also addressed concerns around the large disparity between rich and poor in Taiwanese society.

Musically, the song ‘Night Buses’<sup>50</sup> (CD Website link track 6)<sup>51</sup> shows the influence of Taiwanese traditional narrative form *nian’ge*, sometimes translated as ‘sing-and-tell’ (唸歌) (CD website link track 7).<sup>52</sup> The origin of Taiwanese sing-and-tell can be traced back to Qing Dynasty and was brought in from China by immigrants (Huang 1997: 32). According to Jian, Taiwanese sing-and-tell performance consists two parts: folk song singing and storytelling; it was often practiced by street beggars or merchants to attract audiences before the end of World

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<sup>49</sup> Labour Exchange. 1999. *Let’s Sing Mountain Songs*. CD.TMCD-310. Taipei: Tree Music.

<sup>50</sup> Labour Exchange. 1999. *Let’s Sing Mountain Songs*. CD.TMCD-310. Taipei: Tree Music.

<sup>51</sup> wobblies. 2012. 夜行巴士 (交工樂隊 / 林生祥) [Labour Exchange: ‘Night Buses’]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Qy7MgboA8c> (accessed on 23 June 16)

<sup>52</sup> Yang Xioqin. *Traditional Sing and Tell* (唸歌) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BObHcArAGXA> (accessed on 23 June 2016)

War II (Jian 2001: 121–122). The performers of sing-and-tell traditionally accompanied themselves with a *yueqin* (Huang 1997: 37). Lin starts ‘Night Buses’ with a guitar and a drum. The rhythmic instrumental introduction generates a feeling of aggression from the beginning and it remains throughout the song. Although the time signature of the song is set to 4/4, the rhythm of the melody is not fixed.

The song is in a minor key and is in ABACA form. For the section A, the long last note of each phrase suggests traditional Hakka Mountain Songs (I will discuss Hakka Mountain Songs further in this chapter). The fast tempo and Lin’s harsh vocal creates a sense of protest. The lyrics in section B are about the phenomenon of exodus from the rural areas to the cities due to industrialisation. In a lyrical but depressive mode, they tell the story of the oldest son in a family, who was forced to stay in his poor, rural hometown to look after his parents. Section C is the ‘tell’ part. Lin Sheng Xiang recites the inner thoughts of the old farmer (see above) before returning to the sung melody. The song finishes on a crescendo and Lin shouts the slogan of Meinong Anti-Dam movement: “If the Dam Can Be Built, Shit Can Be Eaten!”.



Figure 3.1 Cover of Labour Exchange album *Let's Sing Mountain Songs*

(from <https://music.douban.com/subject/1920129/>, accessed on 23/06/2016)

While 'Night Buses' was written from the standpoint of the local people, the song 'Let's Sing Mountain Songs'<sup>53</sup> (我等就來唱山歌) (CD website link track 6)<sup>54</sup> was a direct descriptions of scenes of Meinong Anti-Dam protest in 1993. 'Let's Sing Mountain Songs' records the moment when the Meinong farmers first arrived in Taipei to protest. The farmers were nervous not only for the demonstration that was about to take place, but they were also anxious about being in a crowded city with tall buildings and cars. Zhong Xio Mei (鍾秀梅), who was one of the core members of Love Meinong Association as well as one of the organisers of the movement, had delivered a short speech through a loudspeaker to the farmers to try to comfort them and to calm them down:

<sup>53</sup> Labour Exchange. 1999. *Let's Sing Mountain Songs*. CD.TMCD-310. Taipei: Tree Music.

<sup>54</sup> Y.Y. Vincent Chang. 2010. 我等就來唱山歌- 交工樂隊 [Labour Exchange: 'Let's Sing Mountain Songs'] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oA4h-1IuJ6Q> (accessed on 16 June 2016)

Folks, please stand proud.

There are a large number of armed police surrounding us, but don't be afraid,

Let's see them as our own brothers and sons.

I know you feel shy and nervous in front of Legislative Yuan, but don't be afraid,

Let's see it as our own house and village.

Come on! Let's sing a mountain song.

(‘Let's Sing Mountain Songs’<sup>55</sup> by Labour Exchange: 1999; my translation)

The actual recording of this short speech by Zhong was incorporated into Lin's ‘Let's Sing a Mountain Song’. Lin begins the song with his solo singing accompanied by acoustic guitar and drum kit. Like most of other songs of this album, ‘Let's Sing a Mountain Song’ had a lyrical start. Zhong's speech was placed in the middle of the song, and soon after it the atmosphere of the piece changed. The transition from the lyrical start to the more up-beat assertive second part of the song is marked with the loud sounds of the *suona* followed by traditional percussion such as gongs and drums. These instruments are the most closely associated with rural life, traditionally performed at weddings and funerals. On the album cover the *suona* is placed next to a megaphone, linking the sounds of traditional music with the sounds of protest.

### 3.3 The Music Style of Lin Sheng Xiang

Since his time working with The Music Den of Guanzi, Lin Sheng Xiang had offered his listeners a soft vocal style and expressive melodies. Although the musical style of *Labour*

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<sup>55</sup> Labour Exchange. 1999. *Let's Sing Mountain Songs*. CD.TMCD-310. Taipei: Tree Music.

*Exchange* was comparable to Lin's early works, it was noticeable that many traditional elements, such as musical instrumentation and the melodies of traditional Hakka mountain songs, were being incorporated into the album *Let's Sing a Mountain Song* (1999). During our interview, Lin explained that "My music was a microphone for the farmers (農人的麥克風), of course I had to use the right language, both verbally and musically" (Lin Sheng Xiang, interview, 05 November 2005, Danshui).

He said that there were a number of occasions that made him reconsider. Back in 1993, Lin composed his first Hakka song named *How Long?* (一九九) based on the story of his mother who was a Meinong farmer. Although the song was written in Hakka, the Western rock style of the music did not appeal to Lin's mother. "What a bad song you have written!" was the only reaction that he received from her. The other incident occurred at one of his gigs that had been held in Meinong in 1997 before the band Labour Exchange was established. Lin described to me how unpopular his rock music was in a rural village where most of the audience were elderly peasants:

The concert took place at the square of a temple which was the centre of the local community. There were about two hundred or more in the audience when I started singing, but only eleven people left at the end! Among them seven were my relatives who were there to support me anyway and other four were the staff of Meinong Aixiang Progress Association which hosted and sponsored the gig! What even worse was there was a drunk old man who came to the temple square on his scooter and shouted at the band, "This is not music what you are playing! There is no *suona* (嗩呐), no *bayin* (八音)<sup>56</sup> and you call this 'music'?" (Lin Sheng Xiang, interview, 05 November 2005, Danshui).

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<sup>56</sup> *Bayin* (eight notes) refers to the eight materials used to make musical instruments in the Chinese classification system, namely metal, stone, string, bamboo, gourd, clay, skin, and wood. Hakka people perform a musical style called the Eight Hakka Notes. This type of music is led by the *suona* and is often used for ancestor worship and banquets. <http://www.hakka.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=10418&ctNode=2260&mp=2256&ps> (accessed on 24 June 2016)

The negative comments of Lin's mother and the experience of the Meinong concert, which was not well-received by the local community, made Lin to consider the questions:

How do I make my music return to my hometown (我的音樂如何回鄉)?

Although I sang for my community, I didn't use the right language and therefore I failed to make a connection with my people. More importantly, what can I do to make my music become 'our music?' (Lin Sheng Xiang, interview, 05 November 2005, Danshui)

The question of 'our music' was raised again when Lin participated in an international music festival in the following year:

I joined a music festival called Spring Scream (春天的吶喊) in Kenting (see Chapter 5). We were told to bring our own instruments with us to perform, and I brought my guitar. A large number of international musicians also performed for the festival and most of them brought traditional instruments that represented their identity. I was ashamed of myself; I know nothing about my roots and identity. (*Lin was then desperate to find an instrument that he felt connected.*) I then bought a *pipa*<sup>57</sup> from a friend's musical instrumental shop which had just recently closed down. I had no idea how to play the *pipa*, so I drilled two holes on the each side of the instrument, installed a belt and carried it on my shoulder. I played the *pipa* like playing a guitar. (Lin Sheng Xiang, interview, 05 November 2005, Danshui)

To compose "our music", Lin Sheng Xiang's first step was to go back to his musical roots. He began with a new arrangement of instruments, and combined Taiwanese traditional music instruments including the *yueqin* (moon lute) and *suona* into his Western rock compositions. Lin explained that the fundamental reason that why traditional instrumentation was important to him was that, "The villagers are familiar with these instruments, which are inseparable from their daily countryside life. I believe when other people hear my music, they

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<sup>57</sup> *Pipa* is a Chinese four-stringed plucked lute.



immediately know it represents their voices” (Lin Sheng Xiang, interview. 05 November 2005, Danshui).

Lin highlighted the significance of using traditional music instruments for his community and his compositions. However, when I pointed out that the plucked lute – *yueqin* – was not a specifically Hakka musical instrument, he explained that the main reason he chose this particular instrument was because of its deep and symbolic connection to a well-known Taiwanese folk musician called Chen Da (陳達). Chen Da (1906–1981) was a Taiwanese self-taught folk singer and *yueqin* performer. Chen was born in the Japanese colonial period into a deprived family; and the Hengchun district he was brought up in was a rural community located on the southern tip of Taiwan (Jian 2009: 60).

Chen started to sing and play *yueqin* in his teens and earned living as a street performer (Jian 2009: 58). One of his most renowned songs is called ‘Sixiang qi’ (思想起) (CD website link track 8)<sup>58</sup> which is a traditional folk song that originated from Chen’s hometown (Chen 1997: 26–27). The Hengchun style of folk songs that Chen Da sung are closely linked to the environment surrounding the area. Mountains, rivers, animals and birdsongs are often the theme of the songs (Chen 1997: 28). Traditionally this type of singing is accompanied by the *yueqin* and transmitted orally (Chen 1997: 26). As there are no fixed melody or lyrics, most of the song is improvised by the performers (Chen 1997: 28).

In his late twenties, Chen Da had suffered from severe illnesses and became physically disabled. Despite his disability, Chen continued to perform in the street (Jian 2009: 58). Chen’s singing was later recognised by two European-trained Taiwanese ethnomusicologists, Xu Changhui and Shi Weiliang in the late 1960s; he was brought to capital city of Taipei and

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<sup>58</sup> twdavid10000. 2010. 陳達 思想起 [Chen Da’s recording of ‘Sixiang qi’]  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGxWdXBUm6k> (accessed on 07 June 2016)

recorded albums to preserve his “dying music” (Lin 2010: 256). Chen Da’s personal background and his unique singing attracted the attention of young intellectuals, writers and artists during the late 1970s.

As I argued in Chapter 2, the 1970s was a time when Taiwan suffered from international setbacks, and Taiwanese people started to look for an identity of their own. This movement was formed and reflected in literature, music and art-making. In 1977, Chen was invited to perform at Tamkang University<sup>59</sup> at a concert called An Evening of Chinese Folk Song (中國民俗歌謠之夜). The concert was organised by students as part of the movement to Sing Our Own Songs (see Chapter 2), and Chen Da’s song was among the music that represented “our songs” (Zhang 2003: 127). Students of Tamkang University adopted Chen Da as a model, and aspired to become a New Chen Da (新的陳達) (Zhang 2003: 129) and to write songs of their own.

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<sup>59</sup> Tamkang University (淡江大學) is where the movement of Taiwanese Campus Folk Song started (see Chapter 2). It is also the university that Lin Sheng Xiang attended during 1993–1997.



Figure 3.2 Chen Da Playing the *yueqin*

(From <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKTci3i244>, accessed on 24/06/2016)

To Lin Sheng Xiang, his motivation for learning *yueqin* developed because it had symbolic associations with Chen Da, who represented a type of folk music deeply rooted in Taiwan. Furthermore, although Lin emphasised that guitar and *yueqin* are fundamentally totally different instruments, from the technical point of view, *yueqin* allowed Lin to apply the basic principles of playing the guitar, such as using Western chord arrangements on it. Lin admitted that he was limited in his ability to play traditional instruments as he had never been trained.

Lin is a self-taught music performer who was only given a guitar by his mother as a present to celebrate the start of his new life as a university student. During his time at Labour Exchange, he started a project to modify the *yueqin* and hoped that would allow him to use the modernised instrument to catch the traditional sound and express himself better. Lin used a *yueqin* for the song ‘The Hatamsui River Has Been Writing Our Genealogy’, and said to me that the sound of the instrument represents the river, which people in Taiwan have been deeply reliant upon.

Tamara Livingston has theorised the term musical revival as a “social movement with the goal of restoring and preserving a musical tradition which is believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past” (Livingston 1996: 68). She also notes that the purpose of revival is often “to serve as cultural opposition and as an alternative to mainstream culture ... [and to] improve existing culture through the values based on historical value and authenticity expressed by the revivalists” (Livingston 1996: 68). Lin Sheng Xiang’s attempts to adopt and revive the *yueqin* were not only for the sound itself, but also for the meanings and the cultural values embodied by the instrument, behind which are closely linked to the people and the land of Taiwan. A new incarnation of Taiwanese social-political consciousness was embodied by Lin’s newly invented tradition.

In addition to Taiwanese traditional musical instruments, it was noticeable that backing vocals were extensively used in Lin’s music for this album. The singing of Hakka mountain songs and choirs are crucial elements in Lin’s music. In Taiwan, most of the Hakka immigrants populated in the mountainous areas of Taiwan when they first arrived the island from China around late 1690s (Li 1997: 18), and it was then that the mountain songs developed (Huang 2001: 55). There were many different types of mountain songs. The most well-known melody is called simply ‘Old Mountain Song’ (老山歌), and is considered the original form of such music (Huang 2001: 55). According to Huang Lin-yu in her book *Traditional Taiwanese Music* (台灣傳統音樂) (2001), the ‘Old Mountain Song’ was sung for the purpose of communication between two parties who were a long distance apart; therefore the ‘Old Mountain Song’ was often in call and response style. Another characteristic of the ‘Old Mountain Song’ was its long sustained final note (Huang 2001: 55). The themes of the Hakka Mountain songs were varied,

and mostly were working songs. Mountain songs<sup>60</sup> were normally sung when working on the fields or picking tea (Huang 2001: 55).

The traditional Hakka mountain songs provided the blueprint for Lin's album. Taking the song 'If the Dam Can Be Built, Then Shit Can Be Eaten'<sup>61</sup> (水庫係築得屎嘛食得) (CD website link track 9)<sup>62</sup> as an example, the phrase 'If the Dam Can Be Built, Then Shit Can Be Eaten' was in fact the slogan adopted by Meinong people for the movement, and it was sung by Lin and his choir in call and response mode. At the end of each section, Lin held a long sustained note typical of Hakka mountain songs. Furthermore, the song incorporated a variety of recorded dialogues that expressed views and debates regarding the dam building on different occasions. These were the voices of people from different social classes, including politicians, writers, farmers, sociologists, students and scholars, who shared one common aim, to oppose the building of the dam.

During our interview, Lin explained that the main purpose of featuring Hakka mountain song and people's voices was to create a sense of the Meinong community who shared a common goal; to reject the dam construction. And the use of obscene words (shit can be eaten) was intentionally employed, not only to emphasise people's opinions and to express anger toward to the government, but also to create an iconic link between the style of the language and the underprivileged social class who voiced them (Lin Sheng Xiang, interview, 05 November 2005, Danshui).

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<sup>60</sup> Mountain songs are widespread across China. For further discussion see Schimmelpenninck (1997).

<sup>61</sup> Labour Exchange. 1999. *Let's Sing Mountain Songs*. CD.TMCD-310. Taipei: Tree Music.

<sup>62</sup> De617. 2009. 水庫係築得屎嘛食得 ['If the Dam Can Be Built, Then Shit Can Be Eaten'] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IJV-b1AZiw> (accessed on 06 June 2016)

### **3.4 Movement, Root Seeking and Identity**

The close relationship between popular music and social movements is reviewed by Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison in their study of social movements and cultural transformations in America during the 1960s (Eyerman and Jamison 1995: 449–468). The movement, according to Eyerman and Jamison, is a form of collective identity, which is articulated not merely through organisations or mass demonstration, but also through popular culture, especially music. In most cases, popular music and social movements can be mutually and jointly reinforcing. While the ideas, images, and feelings of social movements are distributed in and through popular music, social movements, on the other hand, have great influence on the development of popular music (Eyerman and Jamison 1995: 452, 464).

Popular music in 1960s America “functioned as another kind of social theory” (Eyerman and Jamison 1995: 464). Popular songs “identified social problems, as well as gave names to vague feelings of alienation and oppression” (Eyerman and Jamison 1995: 464). Their lyrical, poetic and easy-to-understand song texts translated the political radicalism into a far more comprehensible idiom. Both protest pop and the protest movement offered a “sense of belongingness, a sharing in a collective vision” (Eyerman and Jamison 1995: 464), and more importantly provided the “basis of common understanding and common experience for a generation in revolt” (Eyerman and Jamison 1995: 464).

During the 1960s in America, various social movements including the Civil Rights, Labour and Anti-War movements used popular music as a tool to promote their cause. The period of the 1960s in America was also the time when folk revivals arose. In his essay ‘Reconsidering Rock’, Keightley (2001) claimed that the American folk revival emerged in the 1960s in reaction to the developments of mass society and mass culture, which were the result of industrial capitalism and often blamed for the homogenisation and degradation of modern culture (Keightley 2001: 120–121).

The rapid growth of mass culture and mass society not only resulted in a loss of community, tradition and meaning in the lives of ordinary people, but also articulated a growing anxiety about the unrestrained growth of distant, commercial-bureaucratic interests over those of individuals and communities (Keightley 2001: 120). To seek escape from a mass culture which was artificially produced, a new folk culture that emphasised roots, tradition, the communal and the rural had emerged.

In the sphere of popular music, songwriters started to craft a new authentic music that was believed to be pure, genuine and organically connected to the community that produced it. The use of marginal musical traditions and the instrumentation of the pre-industrial period, such as acoustic guitar rather than the artificial technology of electric guitar, were the main characteristics of the folk revival of the 1960s. By reviving older styles and songs, folk culture presented not only an unspoken criticism of contemporary music and society, but also helped project a new vision of America in a peaceful way (Keightley 2001: 120–122). As the songwriters often adopted the folk style of music and song texts to address social issues of the time, the folk revival was embraced as “people’s music” (Keightley 2001: 122). The anti-mainstream nature of the folk revival attracted educated and urban people.

In Taiwan, I argue that the making of Lin Sheng Xiang’s album *Let’s Sing Mountain Songs* was directly inspired by the American folk movement both musically and socially. Although the model of American folk revival of the 1960s was adopted by Taiwanese young elite in the 1970s to construct a Chinese identity that was different from the American (see Chapter 2), Hsin Mei Fen points out in her Ph.D. thesis that the Taiwan folk song movement embodied a different faction of society.

The spirit of ‘anti-authoritarianism’ that formed in America was not captured by the songwriters of Taiwanese campus folk song. Instead, the campus folk song movement

represented a group of people who were close to the centre of power (Hsin 2012: 190–191). Lin Sheng Xiang's music, on the other hand, not only adopted a musical style which emphasised the authenticity of the musical elements, it also addressed local social concerns and spoke up for marginalised and disadvantaged groups. More importantly, through his music-making, Lin articulated a collective identity of a group who shared a common goal and vision.

Furthermore, I argue that Lin's music was closely bound up with the process of Taiwanisation (*bentuhua*) that also shared a number of similarities to American folk revival movement of the 1960s. The development of Taiwanisation started in early to mid-1970s, when the *xiangtu* movement (literally: homeland soil) literature was thriving. Emerging in the 1960s, *xiangtu* (nativist) literature expanded during Taiwan's international setbacks in the 1970s, and it was adopted by some young intellectuals as a public call for reforms as well as for awareness of the damage caused by rapid industrialisation (Gold 1993: 184).

Both *xiangtu* literature and American folk-pop focused on a search for roots, and the themes central to these movements focused on the lives of common people and rural communities. In Taiwan, *xiangtu* writers often adopted Taiyu language and slang which were still used in rural areas despite the discouragement of the Chinese Nationalist government (Gold 1993: 188). Although it was generally claimed that they were apolitical, many of the *xiangtu* writers became involved in social activism and began to take part in political activities in support of the newly growing Non-Party democratic movement (Gold 1993: 184–187); and the *xiangtu* movement developed into a Taiwanese-oriented self-conscious movement around 1977 (Gold 1993: 184).

The *xiangtu* literature movement had a close interconnection with many aspects of Taiwanese culture including music, films and art-making. Hwang Chun-min (黃春明)'s story *Sea-Gazing Days* (看海的日子) for example, was adapted into a film (*Sea-Gazing Days*) in



1983 and a modern dance choreographed by Lin Hwai-Min, the founder of Cloud Gate Dance Ensemble (雲門舞集) (Gold: 1993: 187; Lin 2010: 256). The story of Hwang is about less fortunate people in the Taiwanese society at the time, including a fisherman, a young prostitute and workers. It is notable that Chen Da's folk song singing was inserted as interludes for Lin Hwai-Min's dance composition *Sea-Gazing Days* (Lin 2010: 256). In her study of Taiwanese dance theatre and changing identity, Lin Yatin claimed that through the connection of Hwang's narrative and Chen Da's singing, Lin Hwa-Min proposes the vision of a new homeland – Taiwan, based on a relationship with the land of Taiwan (Lin 2010: 256).

Like the most of *xiangtu* literature, rootedness in the countryside and the effects of industrialisation and economic bureaucratic interests persists in Lin Sheng Xiang's album *Let's Sing a Mountain Song*. Lin uses slang words in his song texts and traditional Taiwanese musical instruments to identify the links to his rural community culturally and musically. He uses ordinary people's voices to support the Anti-Dam Movement as well as to assess social and political problems. According to Lin, the album is not only a story about the Meinong community; it is about Taiwan as a whole. Through his new, traditionally rooted music created for the environmental anti-dam movement, he urges both the government and the people to be aware of the damage done to the environment and the land of Taiwan which they call home. The local campaign was harnessed as a symbol of a wider, national identity, one that encompasses marginalised ethnicities, and creates a powerful connection to place.

### **3.5 Singing in Dialect, Singing Multicultural Nationalism**

Lin Sheng Xiang was certainly not the only musician making these links. Other bands were also working to promote previously marginalised aspects of Taiwanese culture, notably through their use of language. In the late 1980s, soon after martial law was lifted, a Taiwanese

band named Blacklist Workshop took the unusual step of writing songs in Taiyu, a dialect which was largely discouraged under Nationalist rule. This move by the band brought about a movement of Taiyu pop songs (Gold 1993: 188). In his study of language and social movements in Taiwan, Salmenkari claims that, “in multilingual contexts, the chosen language indicates identity and accentuates power relations” (Salmenkari 2013: 181).

Under KMT rule, standardised Mandarin was the only language promoted by the authorities. The singular language policy aimed to construct a shared Chinese identity in Taiwan as well as to define the position of power for the Nationalist government in Taiwan. However, the use of language once again plays an important role when it comes to challenge certain structures of power or proclaim certain identities (Salmenkari 2013: 181). In the case of Blacklist Workshop, singing in Taiyu language was a way to emphasise Taiwanese nationalism as well as to protest the high status of the “foreign national language” (Kloter 2009: 105–106). The act of using dialect was itself a political statement against the dominant Chinese-centric ideology.

However, in the case of Lin Sheng Xiang, he insisted that the use of the Hakka dialect for the album *Let's Sing Mountain Songs* was not related to any form of activism. The language was used as a tool for him to shape a sense of belonging and offered a strong link of identity to his community. During our interview in November 2005, he claimed that “this particular album was produced for and by members of Meinong where the majority of the people speak Hakka”, and that “it is the language in which people can express themselves best”. Moreover, Lin also related the language to his personal identity to his community and noted that “I am a Hakka descendant, and singing in my mother tongue (母語) is the most natural thing [for me] (是再自然不過的事了)” (Lin Sheng Xiang, interview, 05 November 2005, Danshui).

Following the lifting of martial law in 1987, the island entered a more liberal democratic era. Unlike his conservative associates, President Lee Teng-hui (李登輝), leader of the KMT in the 1990s, redirected the party's concept from the One China policy to promoting the idea of "One nation, two equal governments: The People's Republic of China governing mainland China, and the Republic of China governing Taiwan" (Chu 2000: 312). Lee's concept had a great influence on policy-making, both internationally and domestically. Internationally, President Lee believed that it was necessary to break the diplomatic isolation which had been a hindrance since the 1970s (Lin 2002: 127). He insisted that the island should have the right to participate in international officialdom and be recognised by the international community (Lin 2002: 127). Domestically, the process of Taiwanisation, which was promoted alongside Chinese cultural hegemony, officially began.

The process of Taiwanisation led to a number of political and socioeconomic changes as well as cultural and educational reforms. To form a new multicultural nationalism, the Lee Teng-hui government adopted the slogan, Community of Shared Fate (生命共同體) that attempted to incorporate all the different ethnicities and cultures in Taiwan into one united community (Chang 2006: 189). Although, as Chang claims, the KMT's big shift in policies from the Great China ideology to a Taiwan-centred ideology was a move to maintain its power in Taiwan (Chang 2006: 202–203), the new ideological mood was immediately taken up and reflected in popular music-making.

A few years after the release of *Let's Sing Mountain Songs*, in 2007 Lin won Golden Melody Award for a new song, 'Planting Trees' (種樹), under the Hakka language category.<sup>63</sup> The Golden Melody Award is the major music award in Taiwan and it brings prestige, exposure

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<sup>63</sup> Unknown. 'The first time in 18 years – The Golden Melody Award was rejected by Lin Sheng Xiang'. *Liberty Times*. 17 June 2007.  
<http://ent.ltn.com.tw/news/paper/136087> (accessed on 07 June 2016)

and economic advantage to prize-winners. Nevertheless, Lin refused the prize as he believed that music should only be divided into categories according to genre rather than by ethnic group or language. During the ceremony, Lin claimed:

Today we should be gathering here because of music. I appreciate that my music was recognised...but my team and I have decided to reject this award. We entered this competition with the view of having an opportunity to express our thoughts [on the language division]. The prize money that I won will be donated to ecological protection organisations, including local Meinong tree planting team, and to press agencies that specialise in reporting on organic agriculture.<sup>64</sup> (My translation)

Lin believed that music should not be a tool to encourage ethnic or language divisions. Instead, he used music as a means to raise awareness of the need for environmental protection in Taiwan, and to safeguard the land that all the Taiwanese people live on regardless of their ethnicity or the language they speak. In this context, I believe Lin's land-centred discourse is not only closely connected to *xiangtu* literature of the 1970s, it is also a reflection of the process of Taiwanisation and Lee Teng-hui's concept of the Community of Shared Fate.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the music of Lin Sheng Xiang is a direct response to the process of Taiwanisation. To raise environmental awareness in Taiwanese society, Lin links his music to the land by blending traditional Taiwanese soundscapes and Western popular music. By using cultural symbols, such as traditional music instruments and local language, Lin hoped to create a new take on tradition that belonged to the new Taiwanese multicultural society, and which could be shared by the Taiwanese community regardless of their

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<sup>64</sup> Lin Sheng Xiang rejects Golden Melody Award  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aufod8VSVnA> (accessed on 07 June 2016)

backgrounds. His concept of our music echoes the statement on campus songs (discussed in Chapter 2) about singing our own songs. The difference here is that Lin's idea of 'us' is no longer referring to the Chinese nation, he no longer sings about the Yangtze river; his focus is situated at the level of a minority village, which stands for Taiwan.

Lin Sheng Xiang believed that music should be a tool to encourage solidarity of Taiwan and therefore he decided not to receive his Golden Melody Award. In response to his rejection, the Government Information Office, which was the organiser of the music event, expressed willingness to discuss the matter with Lin, but nearly a decade later, in 2016, the system of Golden Melody Awards and the division by language remains the same.<sup>65</sup> In the year 2000 when the DPP took power, President Chen Shui-bian announced that the dam building plan in Meinong would be postponed (Lin 2012: 1), and the Anti-Dam Movement ended after near a decade of protest. Nevertheless, Lin Sheng Xiang did not stop his mission to protect and to sing for the land that Taiwanese people call home, but continued, in his own words, to "fulfil his social responsibility' as a Taiwanese citizen by creating songs" (Lin Sheng Xiang, interview, 05 November 2005, Danshui).

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<sup>65</sup> Golden Melody Awards. <http://gma.tavis.tw/GM27/GMA/finalist.asp> (accessed on 25 June 2016)

## Chapter 4: Taike (台客), Music and Identity

In April 2006, a concert called Taike Rock Concert took place in Taipei. This was the second time a concert was put on under this name, following the initial show in 2005. More than 70,000 fans attended, and the total takings in ticket sales came to 30,000,000 NT dollars (£650,000 GBP). In addition, merchandise such as Taike T-shirts and bags, worth about £100,000, were also sold at the concert.<sup>66</sup> With the support of this large number of fans, the second Taike Rock Concert can be considered one of the most successful musical events in Taiwanese popular music history.



Figure 4.1 The 2007 *Taike Rock Concert* in Taipei

(from <http://www.kmslbzc.com/5Y%2Bw5a6i5pGH5rua.html>, accessed on 01/02/2009)

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<sup>66</sup> Shui, Renquen. 2006. 'Here comes the Taike Wind', *Business Today*. Vol. 489.  
<http://www.businesstoday.com.tw/article-content-92751-151184> (accessed on 17 October 2008)

After Lee Teng-hui's open development of Taiwanisation during the 1990s, the discourse of Taiwanese subjectivity had already grown (Chang 2006: 199). Since the rise to power in 2000, the DPP has promoted the Taiwanisation movement (本土化), not only to re-construct the cultural identity of Taiwan (Guy 2005: 153), but also in an attempt to form a "new motherland" (Chang 2006: 187–203). The process of Taiwanisation took on a new aspect of de-sinification. In order to impose a fresh Taiwanese consciousness that opposed the old China-oriented Chinese Nationalism, the DPP shifted its focus to popular culture and creative industries, and stressed the added values that culture and creativity can bring (Chang 2006: 194).

In response to this political movement, during the mid-2000s, the Taiwanese music industry adopted Taïke culture – a term which was historically an insult applied to local Taiwanese people; it was associated with ethnic and class humiliation – and re-packaged it as a commercial product. The commercial forces of the music industry transformed the discourse of Taïke into a fashion statement. The reclaimed term Taïke also entered the discourse of politicians and journalists, where it denoted Taiwanese authenticity.

In this chapter, I will employ the 'authentic' Taiwanese cultural phenomenon, Taïke, to examine how a new Taiwanese identity was created under the rule of the DPP. I consider the following questions: What were the associations of Taïke culture in mainstream Taiwanese social and political contexts before the term was reclaimed and re-signified? Why was local Taïke culture, which contrasted with mainstream aesthetic, linguistic and class values, adopted by the music industry to create a musical identity for Taiwan? How did the vulgarity of Taïke become the generative principle for an authentic cultural phenomenon? What does the new Taïke culture reveal about political ideologies of authenticity?

This chapter is divided into three main sections. First, I explore the culture of Taike through the dancing and stripping performances known as Decorated Electric Vehicle Shows (電子花車秀) that are rooted in ritual contexts and community celebrations. The Decorated Electric Vehicle Show usually takes place in the rural areas of the island. This kind of public erotic display is considered offensive by the educated elite, and is generally discouraged by the officials. Since their beginnings in the 1980s, the shows have generated great controversy, but their performing style and meanings are closely connected to the everyday life of the ‘real’ Taike, i.e. local Taiwanese rural communities.

In the second part of this chapter, I examine the music of the band named LTK Commune, which was formed by a group of educated elite young men in the 1990s. LTK Commune was the first to claim the term Taike for their commercial cultural products. However, as an underground band, the LTK Commune failed to spread their new concept of Taike, which was not incorporated into the mainstream culture until 2005, when it formed a fashionable subculture in Taiwan. In the final part of this chapter, I examine how the culture of Taike was embraced and repackaged by the commercial force of Taiwan’s music industry in an attempt to form a new musical and cultural identity for the island.

#### **4.1 Who are the Taike?**

The origin of the term Taike is untraceable. A common view is that the term was used to deride local Taiwanese by Mainland Chinese when they first arrived in Taiwan after the KMT’s retreat from China in the late 1940s (Silvio 2009: 342). During this unsettled time, ethnic and cultural conflicts developed between the two groups, and along with this came ethnic slurs: recent



immigrants from China were called *wa xieng di* (外省豬, Mainland pigs in Taiyu) and, in return, local Taiwanese were called *tu taike* (土台客, Taiwanese peasants in Mandarin).<sup>67</sup>

The word Taike was used in an abusive, discriminatory way, as evidenced by the Taiwanese film entitled *A Brighter Summer Day* (牯嶺街少年殺人事件; Chang 2006)<sup>68</sup> that was released in 1991. It was directed by a Taiwanese director, Edward Yang (楊德昌), and was based on a murder that took place in the 1960s. The film described the typical life of Mainland Chinese who fled to Taiwan with the KMT authorities after the Second World War. The second generation of Mainland Chinese were soon born and were brought up in government-built villages (眷村).

Nonetheless, the political environment was uneasy at the time on the island of Taiwan. The different cultural and political backgrounds of Chinese Mainlanders and local Taiwanese created a large gap between the two. *A Brighter Summer Day* focused on the second generation of Mainland Chinese. Although those children were born in Taiwan, they were still seen as outsiders by local Taiwanese, like their parents. This led the second generation Chinese Mainlanders to form street gangs to search for their identity in Taiwanese society and also increase their sense of security. In the film, the word Taike was mentioned several times by Chinese Mainlanders in Taiwan, and implied that they were belittled and disparaged.

The term Taike has developed and been given different definitions over time. In 2004, a group of people who self-identified as Taike were invited to present two Taiwanese television programmes, *Two Generations Electric Company* (兩代電力公司) and *Here Comes Kangxi*

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<sup>67</sup> Huang, Mei .2005. 'The new ubiquity of Taike: Taiwanese identity goes faddish'. *Pots Weekly*, 16 September, 2005, Number 377. [http://publish.pots.com.tw/english/Features/2005/09/16/377\\_17](http://publish.pots.com.tw/english/Features/2005/09/16/377_17) (accessed 16 January 2012)

<sup>68</sup> Chang, Shih-lun (張世倫). 2006. 'The original Taike rockers--LTK Commune' (Translated from Chinese by Scott Gregory). *Taiwan Panorama*. [http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show\\_issue.php?id=200669506094e.txt&table=2&h1=RXRobmljaXR5IGFuZCBDdWx0dXJl&h2=TWlubmFu](http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show_issue.php?id=200669506094e.txt&table=2&h1=RXRobmljaXR5IGFuZCBDdWx0dXJl&h2=TWlubmFu) (accessed on 11 April 2015)

(康熙來了), which produced a series of episodes on the topic of Taiké (Chang 2006). Both were produced by Zhang Renxiong (詹仁雄), a second generation Chinese Mainlander who was born in Taiwan (Chang 2006). These two programmes were talk shows where a group of people gathered to discuss various topics and social issues introduced by the hosts in a relaxed, humorous and informal atmosphere. The naturalness of this type of free and easy programme attracted young viewers, particularly high school and university students.

The television series *Taiké*, produced in 2004, was attended by a panel of guests who deliberated on their experiences as Taiké, and demonstrated to the audience stereotypes of what a ‘real’ Taiké might look like. Episodes like ‘I am a Taiké, but I am very handsome’ (我很台，但是我很帥) offered a discussion on the apparel and behaviour of Taiké. For instance, Taiké would dye their hair many different colours or bleach it blond. Taiké had the worst dress sense. The favourite footwear of Taiké was a pair of cheap blue and white flip-flops, which can be easily found in every night market. It is common for Taiké to dress in fake designer clothes.

Taiké tend to curse in Taiyu a lot during their daily conversation, and chew betel nuts. They also tend to speak Mandarin with a heavy Taiwanese accent. The great popularity of Two Generations Electric Company and Here Comes Kangxi had boosted the popularity of Taiké and made the term newly ‘cool’. Su Hsi-Yao claimed in her linguistic study that the word Taiké at the time was widely adopted by Taiwanese youth to label a person whose “lifestyle and linguistic behaviour were perceived as distinctively local, unknowingly unsophisticated, and unsuccessfully imitative of current fashion trends” (Su 2011: 283), quite aside from the ethnic differences.



Figure 4.2 An Illustration of Stereotyping Taike

(<http://reader.roodo.com/skydaughter/archives/481058.html>, accessed on 29/06/2016)

In 2005, the well-known Taiwanese rock singers, Wu Bai (伍佰), together with other pop singers, attended a two-day *Taike Rock Concert* in Taipei in an attempt to re-appropriate the meaning of Taike. The musicians proudly reclaimed the word, proclaiming that “there is power in bad taste”<sup>69</sup> to express the spirit of Taike. According to Beatniks (2005), in this new definition, a real Taike does not care about other people’s negative comments but is always honest, optimistic and energetic. A Taike is vulgar but jovial, unpolished but expansive, and this is called the ‘Taike spirit’ (台客精神).

The word Taike may have associated negative meanings, but Taike culture reflects the real lifestyle and expectations of the ordinary people on the island. This new Taike discourse was about self-identity and forging a distinctively Taiwanese national culture. Richard Middleton claims that “cultural relationships and culture change are thus not predetermined;

<sup>69</sup> Chang, Shih-lun (張世倫). 2006. ‘The original Taike rockers--LTK Commune’. (Translated from Chinese by Scott Gregory). *Taiwan Panorama*. [http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show\\_issue.php?id=200669506094e.txt&table=2&h1=RXRobmljaXR5IGFuZCBDbWx0dXJl&h2=TWlubmFu](http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show_issue.php?id=200669506094e.txt&table=2&h1=RXRobmljaXR5IGFuZCBDbWx0dXJl&h2=TWlubmFu).(accessed on 11 April 2015)

rather they are the production of negotiation, imposition, resistance, transformation and so on” (Middleton 1990: 8). A month after Wu Bai’s successful concert, the then-President Chen Shui-bian made a statement in which he endeavoured to redefine the term Taike. He stated, “We have to abandon the old definition of the term Taike, which derides Taiwanese people. The new definition stands for an energetic Taiwanese people who have a strong consciousness of their country, self-identity, pride and self-confidence”.<sup>70</sup>

#### **4.2 The ‘Real’ Taike and their Musical Life: The Decorated Electric Vehicle Show (電子花車秀)**

In January 2005, I attended a dinner sponsored by a small temple in a remote village in southern Taiwan. It was held in the front courtyard of the temple, and at least two hundred people attended; men and women, children and elderly people. The temple hired a group of female singers to perform at the dinner. Shortly after the second course began, a woman’s bra was thrown onto our table. I looked up to see that two of the singers had stripped down to the waist as the singing continued. A few male audience members shouted, “More, more! Take all your clothes off!” I knew that this was the beginning of the Decorated Electric Vehicle Show.

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<sup>70</sup> He, Mengque, ‘The President Talks about Taike.’ *Apple Daily*, 02 September 2005. <http://www.appledaily.com.tw/appledaily/article/headline/20050902/2019867/> (accessed 09 August 2014).



Figure 4.3 A Typical Decorated Electric Vehicle Show

([http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/tw/2008-10/21/content\\_10226072.htm](http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/news.xinhuanet.com/tw/2008-10/21/content_10226072.htm),  
accessed on 25/06/2016)

Decorated Electric Vehicle Shows include striptease dancing as well as talk show performances and singing popular songs. This distinctive type of performance can be seen frequently in public during various community events, including funerals, religious festivals and temple fairs. Whether be it in the street, on an estate, at a night market, or in a home, the Decorated Electric Vehicle Show requires its own space. As its name suggests, the back of a vehicle, decorated with flashing neon lights, provides the stage for the show where the strippers and singers perform. There are two main types of Decorated Electric Vehicle. The earlier ones were converted from a medium-sized, open-backed Fortune Van (發財車) which is commonly used by people who run small-scale businesses.

In the countryside, in particular, vegetables, fruit and other daily objects are sold from fortune vans, which are driven from village to village. There is usually a speaker attached to the van. Villagers are informed of the arrival of the van by the owner's announcement through a loudspeaker. A fortune van is multi-purpose and affordable to most people, hence it is used as a common form of business transport. The fortune van is also employed for goods delivery,

house moves, breakfast or snack selling, supermarket advertising, etc. In the 1970s, the back of one of the fortune vans was converted into a small stage by a show business owner (Zhang 2002). The first decorated fortune van was appreciated by the rural communities and was quickly imitated by others.



Figure 4.4 An Original Decorated Electric Vehicle Show

(<http://www.discuss.com.hk/viewthread.php?tid=13151646>, accessed on 25/06/2016)

The later form of Decorated Electric Vehicle was designed solely for the purpose of music and dancing shows. This type is often larger than the traditional fortune van; it is convertible and can be transformed into a large stage. Special effects equipment is also fitted to the vehicle, such as dry ice valves, steel tubes and party lights. Flexible stages, which can be easily lengthened or shortened according to requirements, are available on some of these vehicles. In addition, two or more large speakers are fitted onto the van or placed on the stage to carry the sound for large audiences. Both the early and recent types of Decorated Electric Vehicle are decorated with colourful, glittering cellophane or neon lights. The main aim of decorating the vehicle is to make it appear like a lively cabaret stage. A modern Decorated Electric Vehicle is not cheap, so a Decorated Electric Vehicle company may only own one or two vans.



Figure 4.5 A Medium Size Modern Decorated Electric Vehicle

(<http://www.plurk.com/p/jd7wza>, accessed on 25/06/2016)

Although there has been limited research on Decorated Electric Vehicles, there are two common suggestions about their origins. First, the stage developed from *Yige* (藝閣) (Zhang 2006), a small, portable stage used by travelling opera troupes that originated in mainland China. Second, the Decorated Electric Vehicle is an expansion of the song and dance troupes which were popular for a few decades in Taiwan before the 1970s (Qiu 1999: 114). The mobility and ornamentation of the Decorated Electric Vehicle and its stage share multiple similarities with the *Yige*. However, the performance style of Decorated Electric Vehicle Shows, such as contemporary pop music singing and talk shows can be traced back to the song and dance troupe venues.

*Yige* performances are said to date back to the Song Dynasty (960–1279 C.E.) in the city of Hangzhou, China. It was introduced to Taiwan in the eighteenth century. The book *Dongying Shiluei* (東瀛識略: Brief Record of the Eastern Ocean) by Ding Shaoyi (丁紹儀), written in 1873, describes *Yige* performance in Taiwan:

Some good-looking children are selected to play the roles of well-known stories or tales (on the *Yige* stage). There are several stages and each of them is carried by four people. Drum and wind instruments lead the *Yige* parade (Ding 1957: 26; my translation).

The *Yige* stage today has been fully modernised, with neon lights and modern vehicles (Pan 2003: 1), and the traditional bands that used to lead the *Yige* parade have been replaced by cassette tape recordings and loudspeakers. *Yige* performances were traditionally one of the most important events at temple fairs, which are major annual events in Taiwanese and Chinese agricultural society. Temple fairs have multiple purposes. Xia (1992: 108) suggests three main functions: entertaining people, business trading and, finally, celebrating the birthday of the god housed in the local temple. In today's society, temple fairs still serve these functions. Apart from worshipping the local deity, various types of entertainment are also offered. This specific religious occasion tends to interest a broad range of people, so business trading has become a by-product of it. Traders of all sorts of products, such as clothing, food, and tea, gather outside the temple entrance where many potential customers are milling around (Xia 1992: 108).

As the majority of Taiwanese people follow a mixture of Buddhist and Daoist religious practices, temples to Buddha and local gods can be found in every town. Each area can have two or even more local gods. The gods that people worship symbolise the local community, and temple fairs reflect the temple's reputation in Taiwanese society (Sutton 1990: 536). It is believed that the more prosperous a temple is, the more good fortune it will bring to the locals. Temple fairs are commonly seen as a "social translation" (Feuchtwang 1974: 271) of a god's efficacy. In other words, holding a temple fair helps to reflect how well-liked a particular god is; how wealthy the community is; and how much it has been blessed by the local god.

As a consequence, the community's goal is to put on an impressive, even ostentatious show at temple fairs, and there should be as many activities held during the fair as possible. As



Feuchtwang describes, temple fairs are “territorial cult festivals” (Feuchtwang 2001: 63). In addition to the basic purpose of worship or religious celebration, many activities that are not directly related to religion are also included, such as processions, martial arts displays and banquets (Feuchtwang 2001: 63; Huang, 1994). Traditional puppet shows and opera performances (*gezaixi* and *Yige*) are also an important part of the fairs. All of these performances are aimed at recompensing the gods as well as entertaining the gathered crowds.

In recent decades, due to the lack of interest among young people, traditional temple fair performances have gradually diminished, and *Yige* processions are now rare. The dazzling Decorated Electric Vehicles have adapted the characteristics and functions of the traditional *Yige*, and their strip shows have proved a sure attraction to bring more people to the temple fairs. A big crowd and lively atmosphere, which shows how prosperous the temple is, are important at these religious events, and in this way, the Decorated Electric Vehicle Show has slowly replaced *Yige* at most temple fairs.

Qiu (1999) and Zhang (2002) suggest another more recent forerunner of the Decorated Electric Vehicle Show. They suggest that the first Decorated Electric Vehicles were created in the 1970s and grew out of the variety troupes that were fashionable in Taiwan between the late 1950s and mid-1960s. Among the most popular of these were Black Cat (黑貓歌舞團) and Yixia (藝霞歌舞團) (Qiu 1999: 141). They offered a variety of entertainment, and were known for their luxurious backdrops, colourful costumes and the heavy makeup of their young, female performers (Guo 2006). Pop songs, dancing, acting and sometimes magic shows were all part of the repertoire of the troupes (Qiu 1999: 122), whose members were strictly selected and trained in folkloric and contemporary dance styles including flamenco, jazz, ballet and traditional Chinese dance. A good voice was essential, as singing was a major part of the show.



Fig. 4.6 A Newspaper Advertisement for the Yundong Song and dance Troupe on 18 February 1956

(<http://content.teldap.tw/index/blog/?p=4024>, accessed on 25/06/2016)

A song and dance troupe normally recruited forty to fifty dancers and singers (Guo 2006). Generally the troupes did not have a permanent venue, but toured local theatres throughout Taiwan. Qiu offers a detailed description of the Black Cat troupe's performance in his village when he was ten years old:

...It was the summer of 1958 and it [the Black Cat show] was the biggest event in our fishing village. The well-dressed performers paraded around the streets before the show started and there were so many villagers around; everyone was excited...The song and dance troupe procession was led by musicians. Trumpets, saxophones and drums were the main musical instruments in the *Black Cat* shows. Children were interested in these musical instruments, especially the drum which had a black cat with a bowtie logo on it...Just before the show began, the musicians sat at the entrance to the theatre and played the tune "The black cat is sitting there, and it does not have any pants on" over and over again (Qiu 1999: 139–140; my translation).

The song and dance troupes presented numerous types of modern, Western style dances, such as Tango, tap and jazz, with tap dancing being the most popular of all. Singing popular songs also played a big part in the performances. In contrast to the dances, the songs were mainly composed by native Taiwanese composers. The owner of the Black Cat, Yang Sanlang (楊三郎), was a popular Taiyu song composer himself (Jian 1997: 128). His famous

compositions included ‘Singing of Spring Wind’ (春風歌聲) (1956) and ‘Autumn Wind, Night Rain’ (秋風夜雨) (1954).

The Taiwanese popular music that developed post WW2 still bore a strong Japanese character. The majority of Taiwanese composers of the time, including Yang, received formal musical education in Japan, so the Taiyu popular songs that were composed during the late 1950s and early 1960s were influenced by the model of Japanese popular songs, *enka*. The combination of western musical instruments, traditional Japanese pentatonic scale and a melismatic vocal style reflects the unique character of both the Japanese and Taiwanese pop songs of the time (Jian 1997: 126).

Before the mid-1960s, the most common and popular forms of entertainment were temple fairs or theatre, as televisions were not yet commonly available in every household. Taiwan’s first television broadcast was made only in 1962 (Jian 1997: 129). As Qiu recounts, “Taiwanese people loved watching and sponsoring performances ... and the most well-liked shows were *gezaxi*, dramas and song and dance troupes...theses were entertainment for all kinds of people at all ages” (Qiu 1999: 122). The business of song and dance troupes hit its high point in the 1960s when nearly a hundred groups were active in Taiwan (Qiu 1999: 128).

By the mid-1960s, the Taiwanese entertainment business had become extremely competitive (Zhang 2002). Many well-known song and dance companies such as the Black Cat were forced to disband due to financial difficulties (Wen 2007). As new ideas were needed for a troupe to survive in the market, strip shows were introduced by some companies to boost business (Qiu 1999: 123). The normal song and dance troupes that did not offer erotic performances faced great challenges. Furthermore, as television was becoming more widespread, the traditional song and dance troupes gradually lost popularity.

In the early 1970s, Taiwanese show business remained tough. In an attempt to gain more business opportunities, Luo, who owned a small song and dance troupe in Zhanghua in northern Taiwan, invented the first Decorated Electric Vehicle Show (Zhang 2002). Such productions later proved extremely popular. To save costs, the musicians who used to accompany the song and dance troupes were replaced by one or two electronic keyboard players for these new Decorated Electric Vehicle Shows. For this reason, Decorated Electric Vehicles were sometimes called ‘Electronic Keyboard Vans’ (電子琴花車). Moreover, due to the limited space on the fortune van, Decorated Electric Vehicle shows solely focused on singing, as group dancing to traditional song and the dance troupe programmes could not be performed on such a tiny stage. The loud singing and glittering costumes (and their removal) were the focal points of the show.

To appreciate the Decorated Electric Vehicle Shows, one must understand the culture of *renao* (熱鬧) within Taiwanese society. *Renao* literally means ‘hot’ and ‘noisy’, and refers to a lively, busy and prosperous atmosphere (Moskowitz 2010: 124). The ambience of *renao* is sought after on every occasion, such as New Year celebrations, weddings, birthday parties, temple fairs or even funerals. The level of *renao* indicates how much the occasion is appreciated or respected. Therefore, *renao* is not an atmosphere solely for happy events; it is also for sad occasions, such as funeral (Yu 2004: 138–139). The loud singing and show performances of Decorated Electric Vehicles attract people’s attention and enhance the *renao* atmosphere, therefore the business gained rapidly in popularity.

During the late 1980s, a small van sized-stage could no longer satisfy audiences, so bigger, more eye-catching stages developed. The Decorated Electric Vehicle Shows today are equipped with expensive sound equipment. Musically, Taiyu pop remains the most important, but Techno dance music has also become widespread into the Decorated Electric Vehicle

shows. This dance style, which was popular in Europe, America and Canada during the 1990s, was central to rave culture which was often associated with drugs and youth resistance in the European context (Casey 1992:416; Wilson 2002: 373–412).

In Taiwan, rave culture is closely connected to Taïke culture, and also linked to drugs problems (Wang 2003). Although in Taiwan rave dance is more commonly found in clubs (see below), the style is sometimes performed on the stage of a Decorated Electric Vehicle. In addition to the Taïyu songs, techno dancing, and stripping the Decorated Electric Vehicle Show also include talk shows. The responsibility of the talk show host, who is usually a woman, is to enhance the *renao* atmosphere, commonly by telling dirty jokes.

Due to the sometimes obscene nature of the talk show, and their displays of nudity, Decorated Electric Vehicle Shows have never been approved of by the authorities nor favoured by the social elites. During the 1980s, laws were enacted to combat public displays of nakedness and acts of indecency, but such entertainment usually took place in rural settings where the police authorities were less likely to prosecute. Several decades later, they are still considered offensive, and are still illegal, but they remain a distinctive and popular part of Taiwanese life.

A cultural drama like the Decorated Electric Vehicle Show is more than just entertainment. It is a reflection of Taiwanese society, it “mirrors the social landscape of its adherents” (Wolf 1974: 131), and can be seen as a sketch of Taïke culture. A Decorated Electric Vehicle Show is like Bakhtin’s carnival, a “second world and a second life outside officialdom” (Bakhtin 1968: 6), characterised by laughter, excess (especially of the body and bodily functions), bad taste and offensiveness (Fiske 1998: 81). In the Taiwanese context, the Decorated Electric Vehicle culture represents not only a cultural conflict between elite and popular culture but also a contradiction between social norms and values.

### 4.3 The Creation of New Taike Music: LTK Commune

The first attempt to create a new kind of music known as Taike dates back to 1999 when the LTK Commune (濁水溪公社) first became popular. LTK Commune was an underground pop band, founded in 1989, which consisted of a group of university students. They released an album entitled *Taik's An Eye For An Eye* (台客的復仇) in 1999, which contained a mixture of Western punk rock and Taiwanese local music elements, including *gezaixi* opera, Decorated Electric Vehicle music, folk songs, radio adverts, and funeral band music, to interpret their vision of Taike.<sup>71</sup> LTK Commune was established at a time of chaotic political change. The lifting of martial law in 1987 allowed liberalisation and democratisation, which brought about the legalisation of previously silenced opposition organisations, political parties, and expressions of opposition to the KMT (Guy 2005: 71). The quest for social equality and greater autonomy led to numerous protests, demonstrations and rallies. To maintain its power on the island of Taiwan after these domestic political challenges, the KMT urgently needed to pursue policies of Localisation (本土化) and Taiwanisation (台灣化).

LTK Commune was founded by two guitarists and lead vocalists, Ke Jen-chien (柯仁堅) and Tsai Hai-en (蔡海恩), when they were students at the National Taiwan university; other members of the band joined shortly afterwards but only stayed for short periods. LTK is an abbreviation of “Loh Tsui Kweh”, a Taiyu spelling of the name of the longest river on the island, River Choshui (濁水溪). Naming the band after this river provided a direct link to place

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<sup>71</sup> Chang, Shih-lun (張世倫). 2006. ‘The original Taike rockers--LTK Commune’. (Translated from Chinese by Scott Gregory). *Taiwan Panorama*.  
[http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show\\_issue.php?id=200669506094e.txt&table=2&h1=RXRobmljaXR5IGFuZCBDbWx0dXJl&h2=TWlubmFu](http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show_issue.php?id=200669506094e.txt&table=2&h1=RXRobmljaXR5IGFuZCBDbWx0dXJl&h2=TWlubmFu) (accessed on 11 April 2015)

and locality, and the Taiyu version of the name provided a grassroots feeling and suggested the left wing sentiments of the band.<sup>72</sup>

Although LKT Commune began as a student band, their university life, especially for Ke and Tsai, did not last long. Ke and Tsai became infamous for their acts of vandalism on campus, and they were finally sent down from university for digging up and stealing human remains in 1992 (Frazier 2005). A year before they were expelled, the band funded and published a student newspaper called the *Dejected Press* (苦悶報), which included an article, written by the band, with instructions on how to make a bomb. Off-campus, the band enjoyed the new political freedoms and enthusiastically participated in various social-political demonstrations and rallies calling for social and political reform.<sup>73</sup>

LTK Commune distinguished itself as a music group, but the initial idea for the band was not just about music. The band members claimed that, when LTK Commune was formed in the late 1980s, they could barely play a musical instrument between them. As such, the traditional musical element was limited and their live performances were usually made up of random sounds. The band later stated on the sleeve notes of *The Exile Runner at the Edge of the World* (天涯棄逃人) that music merely served as a tool for creating a group which could act politically and perform in public to get their message across to the people.<sup>74</sup> As a young student band, LTK Commune established itself among the public via an unusual route: acting. The political views and notions of the band were delivered and expressed through short

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<sup>72</sup> Chang, Shih-lun (張世倫). 2006. 'The original Taike rockers--LTK Commune'. (Translated from Chinese by Scott Gregory). *Taiwan Panorama*.  
[http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show\\_issue.php?id=200669506094e.txt&table=2&h1=RXRobmljaXR5IGFuZCBDbWx0dXJl&h2=TWlubmFu](http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show_issue.php?id=200669506094e.txt&table=2&h1=RXRobmljaXR5IGFuZCBDbWx0dXJl&h2=TWlubmFu) (accessed on 11 April 2015)

<sup>73</sup> Zhang, Qienwei. 2005. The LTK Commune. *New Taiwan Magazine*. Vol. 499  
<http://www.newtaiwan.com.tw/bulletinview.jsp?bulletinid=23011> (accessed 13 April 2015)

<sup>74</sup> LTK Commune. 2005. *The Exile Runner at the Edge of the World*. CD. TCM033. Taipei: Taiwan Colors Music.

improvised plays. “We love acting. Acting compensates the audiences for our bad music, we see the element of music only as an act of a play”,<sup>75</sup> Ke stated in an interview.

This un-musical but highly literate band developed a series of short plays linked to the social movements they participated in as students in the 1990s,<sup>76</sup> including the Wild Lily Student Movement (野百合學運), also known as the March Student Movement. This was a six-day demo calling for political reform, held in the capital, Taipei, attended by more than 300,000 college students (Huang 2005). During the demo, LTK Commune improvised plays on stage accompanied by background noise, which they called music, hoping that it would inspire people and attract their attention (Zhang 2005). After this, acting became an essential part of their public performances. “We were for the labour movement and direct elections and all that, but we also wanted to be funny. We were always thinking up things to do at the protests”<sup>77</sup>, Ke said during an interview.

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<sup>75</sup> Zhang, Qienwei. 2005. ‘The LTK Commune’. *New Taiwan Magazine*, Vol. 499  
<http://www.newtaiwan.com.tw/bulletinview.jsp?bulletinid=23011> (accessed 13 April 2015)

<sup>76</sup> Zhang, Qienwei. 2005. ‘The LTK Commune’. *New Taiwan Magazine*, Vol. 499  
<http://www.newtaiwan.com.tw/bulletinview.jsp?bulletinid=23011> (accessed 13 April 2015)

<sup>77</sup> Frazier, David. ‘Exorcising the Pope and other wanton acts: The absurdist, destructive tendencies of LTK, and why that makes them Taiwan’s greatest band ever’. *Pots Weekly*, 7 October 2005, No. 380





Figure 4.7 LTK at Formoz Festival 2007

(<http://www.thinkingtaiwan.com/content/1476>, accessed on 25/06/2016)

The acting style of LTK Commune was influenced by native Taiwanese TV variety shows (綜藝節目). Shows such as *The Supper Club of Pig Brother Liang* (豬哥亮餐廳秀) and *Diamond Stage* (鑽石舞台) were among the most popular in the mid-late 1980s and early 1990s on the island, especially in the less prosperous, less cosmopolitan South. The Supper Club of Pig Brother Liang was one of the most successful productions of the local cable TV Channel, The Set (三立), which was founded in 1983. Set TV's programmes focused on local themes such as grass-roots soap operas and programmes on Taiwanese history and culture. In the mid-1980s, Set TV concentrated its business on pre-recorded programmes released on video-cassettes, instead of live TV broadcasting, and *The Supper Club of Pig Brother Liang* was one of the company's main products at the time.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> <http://www.settv.com.tw/aboutset.php> (accessed on 27 October 2009)



Figure 4.8 A scene of *The Supper Club of Pig Brother Liang* show

([https://xoomclips.com/more\\_clip.php?id=kIYtVcDHQCK](https://xoomclips.com/more_clip.php?id=kIYtVcDHQCK), accessed on 26/06/2016)

A typical episode of *The Supper Club of Pig Brother Liang* would include singing, improvised drama, chat, and interviews with singers. The show was hosted by Pig Brother Liang (豬哥亮) and other male hosts such as Ho Yi-hang (賀一航) and Huang Xi-tian (黃西田), and it was watched by a mainly elderly studio audience. A number of Taiyu singers would be invited to sing on the show, and would also be interviewed by the hosts, or asked to improvise a short play in the studio. This kind of variety show never appealed to conservatives or the educated elite, who considered that they promoted low social and cultural standards. The language that the programme hosts adopted was mainly Taiyu or Mandarin with a very heavy Taiwanese accent, which was not seen as elegant at the time. In addition, the music of the Taiyu singers was seen as vulgar or old-fashioned. The old soft-ballad type of Taiyu songs mainly circulated among the rural poor, and was dismissed by the educated elite as escapist fantasy. Furthermore, the shows consistently included dirty jokes, vulgar and foolish behaviour and offensive language.

Although the content of *The Supper Club of Pig Brother Liang* was criticised by commentators, the programme proved extremely popular, and the video cassettes sold well,

especially in the south. This popularity is reflected in viewers' blogs; for example, one fan wrote that videos of *The Supper Club of Pig Brother Liang* were always played on long haul buses to enable passengers to relax during the journey. The editor of *Big Sound* magazine, Wu Yi-chun (吳逸駿), stated in an interview that the style of the variety show was humorous and accommodating. The rhythm of the programme flowed well and audiences would never feel bored. Although some of the hosts' dirty jokes were crude and obscene, they added true energy to the show<sup>79</sup> (my translation).

Although, or perhaps because, this kind of home-grown variety show was despised by respectable society, the band members claimed that the variety show style inspired and influenced LTK Commune's performances:

The variety shows of Set TV inspired not only our musical style but also our whole performing style. In the variety show, the hosts often interrupted the singer with an extract from a short play. After some silly improvised drama, the singing would continue. This format not only stimulated us but also gave us lots of ideas. The integration of singing and acting within one show then became our new performing routine. We don't want just to sing on stage<sup>80</sup> (my translation).

Performing short sketches was certainly considered uncommon in pop music, but it became one of the features of LTK Commune, even after the band members eventually learned to play their instruments and could offer 'proper' music to their audiences. The band took every opportunity to express themselves through live performances including both music and acting.

Usually, there were themes for different events, and the plots of the plays were created accordingly. The storylines of the band were known for being unexpected, funny, improvised and incoherent. However, the content of the band's sketches was frequently disapproved of by

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<sup>79</sup> He, Donghong. 2006. 'Mr. Ke, please scold me no more! An interview with Ke Renjian'. *BIG SOUND Magazine* Vol. 3.

<sup>80</sup> Jeph. 1999. 'An Over Serious Interview with LTK Commune'  
[http://jeph.bluecircus.net/archives/music/post\\_24.php](http://jeph.bluecircus.net/archives/music/post_24.php) (accessed 17 February 2009)

the general public. Following the style of the variety shows, offensive actions and sexual innuendo frequently featured in the band's sketches. The band went further than simply presenting mildly obscene scenes, and included more extreme behaviour such as nudity, masturbation, aggression, and physical violence.

Their performance at the *Say Yes to Taiwan* (台灣魂) concert in 2001 serves as a memorable example. This concert was named to contrast with the original *Say No to China* (反中國併吞) concert, which had been held on or around 28th February annually since the year 2000 (see Chapter 1). The lead singer of the black metal band, Chthonic (閃靈), Freddy Lin (discussed in Chapter 5), an active advocate of Taiwanese independence, founded both *Say No to China* and *Say Yes to Taiwan*. The *Say Yes to Taiwan* concert, held at the 228 Memorial Park in Taipei in 2001, was the second time that LTK Commune participated in this series of concerts. During an interview prior to the concert, the band expressed strong anti-Chinese views. When asked if they would bravely go to the front line if China declared war on Taiwan, Ke replied:

Our notion (of China) is violent. We can't wait to form a guerrilla group, and can't wait to cross the strait...to kill some Chinese people, even if we have to die. Anyway, our lives are worth nothing, we may as well just kill Chinese men and rape Chinese women.... Fuck, isn't it great? This is so cool...<sup>81</sup> (my translation)

During the concert, LTK Commune's sketch once again shocked its audience. The story focused on exacting "revenge through exploiting Chinese women"<sup>82</sup> (嫖大陸妹不忘建國) (CD website link track 10)<sup>83</sup> and the play began with the band member, Tsai, entering wearing women's clothes and a long curly wig to play the role of a Chinese bride from Harbin. He

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<sup>81</sup> Qiu Dezhen. 2001. 'Can't Wait to Kill a Few Chinese, How Great!', *Pots Weekly*, 146:7

<sup>82</sup> Zhang, Qienwei. 2005. 'The LTK Commune'. *New Taiwan Magazine*, Vol. 499.  
<http://www.newtaiwan.com.tw/bulletinview.jsp?bulletinid=23011> (accessed 13 April 2015)

<sup>83</sup> Documentary by LTK: *Rotten Brain* (from 4:30-6:25)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtJmsxNhImA> (accessed on 25/06/2016)

declared to the audience “Please sit down everybody. Today, we are here to play Bach’s symphony, his Symphony Number 4”.<sup>84</sup> LTK Commune did not play Bach but their own music. A few seconds later, the sketch started. The Chinese bride lay down on a blanket to await her Taiwanese husband (played by Ke), then the couple simulated making love on stage. During the sex scene, Ke asked his Chinese bride to shout, “Independence for Taiwan, Taiwan is independent!”,<sup>85</sup> together with him. After the couple finished, Ke turned to the audience and said, “This is the way to fuck the Chinese.”<sup>86</sup>

This performance shocked the general public, and the band was criticised following the concert. Lydia, a member of [www.music543.com](http://www.music543.com), a well-known Taiwanese pop music online forum, wrote:

I’m a fan of LTK Commune but, as a woman, I feel humiliated (by this play). It wasn’t the obscene scene that upset me; it’s the band’s male chauvinism that I find disturbing. The main purpose of the concert is to reject China and say yes to Taiwan, and this should have nothing to do with women or sex. It is certainly not proper for the band to interpret the original idea of the concert in such an unfair, disrespectful manner<sup>87</sup> (my translation).

Other forum members agreed. Bass, another fan of LTK Commune, wrote:

I understand this is the style of the band. But (the performance) has made me wonder if society has been too tolerant (towards the band’s behaviour)<sup>88</sup> (my translation)?

The atmosphere at LTK Commune’s live performances was always chaotic. In addition to performing plays which deviated from social norms, they frequently displayed violent behaviour. During their concerts, band members sometimes smashed their musical instruments or objects they found on stage. Their violent actions were sometimes not limited to the stage,

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<sup>84</sup> Documentary by LTK: *Rotten Brain* (from 4:30-6:25)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtJmsxNhImA> (accessed on 25/06/2016)

<sup>85</sup> Documentary by LTK: *Rotten Brain* (from 4:30-6:25)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtJmsxNhImA> (accessed on 25/06/2016)

<sup>86</sup> Documentary by LTK: *Rotten Brain* (from 4:30-6:25)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtJmsxNhImA> (accessed on 25/06/2016)

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.music543.com/phpBB2/viewlist.php?l=31641> (accessed on 05/08/2008)

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.music543.com/phpBB2/viewlist.php?l=31641> (accessed on 05/08/2008). (my translation)

as the band also frequently interacted with their audience, as evident from a documentary about the band, *The Rotten Brain*. During a live performance, after the band had destroyed all of their guitars on stage, Ke threw the broken pieces of instruments at the audience, injuring a couple of fans at the front. Ke said in an interview a few years later:

I'm sorry it got out of hand, but these things happen at our concerts ... she (the audience member) wasn't an innocent bystander, she came to see us. The media didn't look at it like that. They went all out to demonise us and what we do, which was totally wrong... I don't think it really mattered what we did with the music by then, as we'd already built up a reputation for being a must-see band. We simply gave people what they wanted—total chaos<sup>89</sup> (my translation).

The anarchic routine sometimes 'inspired' audience members to react to the band. During one of their *Screams of the Spring* concerts, audience members threw water bottles and rubbish at the band. "Sometimes we prepared what we were going to destroy. Sometimes we didn't prepare anything, and the crowd just got excited",<sup>90</sup> said Ke in another interview. LTK Commune, as an often aggressive, noisy and extreme band, was embraced by a particular niche of fans, mainly young, radical students. However, the political initiative and performance style of the band were not understood or appreciated by the majority of people; they were primarily an underground band. Yi Xian (亦咸), a pop music critic writing in the Taiwanese *Sadik* (黛) magazine, offers a direct explanation of this term: "Underground (*dixia*) music does not mean illegal music practices; instead, it is a type of music which is distinct from the mainstream and only accepted by a small group of people"<sup>91</sup> (my translation). As an underground, independent band, the forum for LTK Commune was normally limited to pubs and other small-scale venues, such as small music restaurants (*geting*), but they gained access to larger audiences at concerts espousing Taiwanisation.

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<sup>89</sup> Phipps, Gavin. 2005. 'Kicking up a racket'. *Taipei Times*, 28 August 28 2005

<sup>90</sup> Frazier, David. 'Exorcising the Pope and other wanton acts: The absurdist, destructive tendencies of LTK, and why that makes them Taiwan's greatest band ever'. *Pots Weekly*, 07 Oct 2005.No. 380.

<sup>91</sup> Yi, Xian. 1986. Underground Music in University Campus. *Sadik Magazine*, Vol 8.

The early music of LTK Commune echoed the social changes of the island at the time. When the band was established, they held anti-government views, and descriptions of the dark side of politics, politicians and social consciousness were themes in their lyrics, especially on their first album. Songs on *Joyous Anal-Retentive* (肛門樂慾期作品集) such as ‘The Black Cat’ (黑貓仔監) mocked politicians’ corruption and illegal connections with gangsters. LTK Commune also produced songs like ‘Work Hard to Achieve’ (愛拼才會贏), ‘Rotten Guavas’ (爛芭樂), ‘U238’ and ‘Contemporary Society’ (現在的社會) which dealt with social issues relating to the natural environment, pollution, the poverty gap and the hardship suffered by the lower classes in Taiwanese society.

The songs on *Joyous Anal-Retentive* were composed in the early 1990s and reflect this period of unrest within Taiwanese society. However, the band gained greater fame among underground music supporters due to its sex-related songs on the same album, such as ‘Cartoon Pistol’<sup>92</sup> (卡通手槍) (CD website link track 11)<sup>93</sup>, ‘May I Ask’ (借問) and ‘Mother’s Embrace’ (母親的擁抱). The latter track challenged social taboos, as the lyrics describe an incestuous scene between a mother and her son. ‘Cartoon Pistol’, composed and sung by Ke, depicts male masturbation and the desire for sex in a comic manner. This song was tremendously popular and widely discussed by fans of the band. A listener wrote on his/her blog: “It is a such dirty song, but I just love singing it!”<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> LTK Commune. 2014. *1995 Taiwan Underground Music Files*. CD. KD-0022. Taipei: Yinyue zheqiao

<sup>93</sup> Shameproduction. 2012. 濁水溪公社-卡通手槍 [Music Video of LTK: ‘Cartoon Pistol’].

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glyYEbcuWKY> (accessed on 25/06/2016)

<sup>94</sup> [http://suinegmai.blogspot.com/2008/05/blog-post\\_11.html](http://suinegmai.blogspot.com/2008/05/blog-post_11.html) (accessed on 06/07/2008)

樹上開著杜鵑	The flowers of Azalea are blooming
白雲飄過窗前	Blue sky is outside my window
可是我只能躺在床上打手槍	But I can only shoot my pistol in my bed
天空下著小雨	It is raining out there
麻雀唱著歌曲	The sparrows are singing
我只能打手槍一個人在夜裡	But I can only shoot my pistol in the silent night
老師說要用功讀書	My teacher asks me to study hard
校長說要復興民族	My Headmaster said we should resuscitate our nation
可是我只能躲在角落裡打手槍	But I can only hide myself in a corner and shoot my pistol
喔～民國八十四年	Oh..It is year 84 (on the Taiwanese calendar)
身上沒有半毛錢	And I have no money
要怎麼出頭天(天天吃大便)	How can I be successful? (voiceover: "eat shit everyday")
喔～快到二零零一年	Oh...It is nearly 2001
一年不如一年	It is getting worse and worse every year
好像卡通片(喔歐喔歐)	It is like living in a cartoon (oh..oh..oh..oh..)
...	
阿媽 我不要做功課啦	Grandma, I am not interested in doing my homework
我不會三角函數和微積分啦	I know nothing about trigonometry and calculus
我只要打手槍啦	I only want to shoot my pistol
憲法增修條文	It is dictated in the Constitutional Law
人民有打手槍的權利和義務	that the people of the nation have the right and responsibility to shoot their pistols



喔～喔～喔～啊～啊～啊～ Oh..oh..oh..ah..ah..ah...

出來啦... Here I come ...

(‘Cartoon Pistol’<sup>95</sup> by LTK Commune: 1995; my translation)

In addition to the unusual stage presentations and lyrics, the rough singing style and out of tune melody were other memorable characteristics of the band. The documentary, *Rotten Brain*, suggests that the band does not spend much time practising singing or playing music. Instead, LTK Commune focuses on devising plots for their sketches. During their live performances, the band often mess around, and so the performance of their music and singing seem to have the lowest priority (Chang 2006). Their studio albums offer the same quality of performance as their live shows, as their voices are untrained and they sing loudly, often shouting rather than singing. However, the noisy music of LTK Commune did not always receive positive feedback. According to some listeners, the band’s music is unusual and difficult to compare with that of other pop composers of the time. For example, Huang, who later became a fan of LTK Commune, wrote, on hearing the band’s music for the first time:

When I first listened to LTK Commune’s album, I had to delete a few songs [from the play list]. I couldn’t understand the music, and I also couldn’t stand it at all. It was just too noisy. Maybe I was too used to the ‘clean’ style of Cheer Chen<sup>96</sup> (陳綺真). (my translation)

LTK Commune’s second album, entitled *Taik’s An Eye for An Eye* (台客的復仇), was made available in 1999. It reflected the band’s typical style, which had been famous since the *Joyous Anal-Retentive*. The melodies of the songs on both albums are punk in style and sometimes aggressive and agitated. Nevertheless, the tracks on *Taik’s An Eye for An Eye* incorporated many elements of local flavour. Like many bands before them, LTK Commune

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<sup>95</sup> LTK Commune. 2014. *1995 Taiwan Underground Music Files*. CD. KD-0022. Taipei: Yinyue zheqiao.

<sup>96</sup> Cheer Chen (陳綺真) is a well-known female Taiwanese Mandarin pop singer, guitarist and pianist. Her first album, *Demo 1*, was released in 1997, winning her Best Music Album Producer and Best Music Video awards at the 17th Golden Melody Awards in 2006. Chen’s music is lyrical, folk-like and frequently accompanied by an acoustic guitar. Chen is also noted for her pure, youthful-sounding voice (Tan 2003).

had adopted traditional musical instruments and tunes to enhance the local atmosphere of the album. The song ‘Something Has Happened in the Village’<sup>97</sup> (農村出事情) (CD website link track 12)<sup>98</sup> serves as a good example of this. It starts with four repeated short phrases played on an electric guitar, and is immediately joined by a *suona* (嗩吶) (a Chinese shawm), which evokes traditional celebrations and festivals. In addition, the song uses the pentatonic scale, evoking Taiwanese folk song melodies.

Like the majority of the songs on *1995 Taiwan Underground Music Files*, the lyrics on the band’s second album dealt with social issues, and the track entitled ‘The Disappearance of the Old’ (老人失蹤) criticised the social welfare system. Furthermore, LTK Commune once again offered its fans a sensation. Sex-related songs such as ‘Defensive War for Male Dignity’ (男性尊嚴攻防戰) and other innuendoes filled the album.

#### 4.4 The LTK Commune and Taike

The *Taik’s An Eye for An Eye* album was composed and released before the topic of Taike (台客) was widely discussed in Taiwanese society. Critics such as Chang (2006) therefore described LTK Commune as the ‘primogenitor of Taike Rockers’ (台客搖滾正港始祖).<sup>99</sup> LTK Commune discussed and presented their ideas about Taike through their music and lyrics. The tracks on *Taik’s An Eye for An Eye* were mainly composed by Ke and Tsai, who aimed for a unique approach:

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<sup>97</sup> LTK Commune. 1999. *Taik’s An Eye for An Eye*. CD. 99142. Taipei: Xiyueyin Records.

<sup>98</sup> 李書維 (2010). 濁水溪公社: 農村出事情 [LTK: ‘Something Has Happened in the Village’] [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIS0\\_4NPF10&list=RDtIS0\\_4NPF10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIS0_4NPF10&list=RDtIS0_4NPF10) (accessed on 25/06/2016)

<sup>99</sup> Chang, Shih-lun (張世倫). 2006. ‘The original Taike rockers--LTK Commune’ (Translated from Chinese by Scott Gregory). *Taiwan Panorama*. [http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show\\_issue.php?id=200669506094e.txt&table=2&h1=RXRobmljaXR5IGFuZCBDdWx0dXJl&h2=TWlubmFu](http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show_issue.php?id=200669506094e.txt&table=2&h1=RXRobmljaXR5IGFuZCBDdWx0dXJl&h2=TWlubmFu) (accessed on 11 April 2015)

Our band presents a brave experimental approach, a subversive constitution, we want to arouse interest from the silent majority, who are not progressive, and make them come out and engage in some real local creativity.<sup>100</sup>

As the band stated, LTK Commune aspired to create ‘true local’ music. In *The Taik’s An Eye for An Eye*, elements of traditional musical instruments, folksong melodies, *Nakasi* and *Gezaixi* genres, all give a local or rootsy flavour to the album. However, the idea of the band being Taike is not limited to the music that the band produces, but is also seen in their style, presentation and, above all, attitude. LTK Commune’s unusual and sometimes troubling behaviour, displayed through both their music and on-stage presentations, have led critics such as Lin Chi-wei (林其蔚 2005)<sup>101</sup> to compare them with European punks. However, the band rejects the label of punk and denies the similarities. Ke stated in an interview:

We formed as a Taiwanese punk band (台灣的龐克), yet Western punk and Taiwanese punk are not the same. The term ‘(Western) punk’ cannot fully describe us or represent our style. In fact, punk and our music are incomparable<sup>102</sup> (my translation).

In the same interview, LTK Commune defined themselves as Taike (台客) and argued that the band’s music and style were all inspired by traditional Taiyu pop singers, local people and everyday life and entertainment, rather than any Western music; “We have always wanted to develop a new style of music since the production of the first album, not just the music, but also the ‘style’, and it is all inspired by the variety shows shown on Set TV”.<sup>103</sup>

LTK Commune drew inspiration from the low class vulgarity and brashness, and sexual overtones of variety shows, and therefore received much criticism in the media. Nonetheless,

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<sup>100</sup> [www.tcmusic.com.tw/cd/033/Default.htm](http://www.tcmusic.com.tw/cd/033/Default.htm) (accessed on 08 April 2015)

<sup>101</sup> [http://neogenova.blogspot.co.uk/2005/08/blog-post\\_31.html](http://neogenova.blogspot.co.uk/2005/08/blog-post_31.html) (accessed 12 April 2015)

<sup>102</sup> Jeph. 1999. ‘An Over Serious Interview with LTK Commune’.  
[http://jeph.bluecircus.net/archives/music/post\\_24.php](http://jeph.bluecircus.net/archives/music/post_24.php) (accessed 17 February 2009)

<sup>103</sup> Jeph. 1999. ‘An Over Serious Interview with LTK Commune’.  
[http://jeph.bluecircus.net/archives/music/post\\_24.php](http://jeph.bluecircus.net/archives/music/post_24.php) (accessed 17 February 2009)

critics have sometimes praised the boldness of the band as they speak honestly of the ugly truth of life, and they interpret LTK Commune's style as paying homage to the working class, who have been long ignored by the social elite. One example is Yang Fang-chin's analysis of the scatology employed in Taiwanese rap and pop songs. She points out that the use of scatology in lyrics can be read as 'the weapon of the powerless to speak against the bourgeois norms of rationality' (Yang 2008: 204). LTK Commune intentionally adopts offensive words/sexual innuendo in order to attack the social and political norms set up by the middle or professional classes. As music critic Zhang Tiezhi (張鐵志) argues, LTK Commune's vulgar, Taike style of presentation can also be ascribed to the localisation or local-culture revival movements of the early 1990s.<sup>104</sup> Zhang Qienwei (張倩瑋) also affirms that the music and style of the band derive from a focus on and affection for local, unrefined culture<sup>105</sup>.

While many critics agree that the vulgar music of LTK Commune represents and speaks for the lower class, Jeph points out that those who listen to their music are usually highly educated people, such as students, rather than the lower class people in whom the band says it is interested.<sup>106</sup> In addition, the band presents their music in a bantering, sometimes ironic and offensive way. From this, Jeph argues that LTK Commune performances are in fact directed against the working class, or rather provide a channel for the urban middle-class youth to vent their angst.

The vulgar language, violent acts and atypical music of LTK Commune were certainly unusual in Taiwanese society at the time. As Jeph argues, I believe that the intention of the band was certainly not to promote or inspire the popular culture of the lower class but, as they stated in an interview, to express their anger and desire for revenge against society which they

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<sup>104</sup> <http://blog.roodo.com/SoundsandFury/archives/93564.html> (accessed on 10 March 2015)

<sup>105</sup> Zhang, Qienwei. 2005. 'The LTK Commune'. *New Taiwan Magazine*, Vol. 499. <http://www.newtaiwan.com.tw/bulletinview.jsp?bulletinid=23011> (accessed 13 April 2015)

<sup>106</sup> [http://jeph.bluecircus.net/archives/music/post\\_31.php](http://jeph.bluecircus.net/archives/music/post_31.php) (accessed on 10 March 2015)

regard as being full of unfairness and discrimination. However, their radical and influential contribution through the album *Taik's An Eye for An Eye* was to bring into the national discussion the Taike culture that had long been ignored by the middle classes.

#### 4.5 'Commercialised' Taike Music

As an underground band, the music of LTK Commune never achieved much commercial success. Although they had followers, the band's music hardly circulated in the mainstream market. Their idea of a new kind of Taike music did not become mainstream in the late 1990s and early 2000s while the band was active. Only later, when the Taiwanese pop star, Wu Bai (伍佰), opened the first *Taike Rock Concert* in Taipei in August 2005, did LTK Commune's vision of 'Taike' eventually spread to the mainstream.

The first *Take Rock Concert* took place in 2005 in Taipei. In addition to Wu Bai and his band, China Blue, the line-up included Shining 3 Sisters (閃亮三姊妹), the Free Night, MC Hotdog, Joy Topper (豬頭皮) and Bobby Chen (陳昇). All of these performers were well-known local Taiwanese pop entertainers. The concert commenced with a performance by Shining 3 Sisters, a pop group formed in 2003 by three sisters from Southern Taiwan. Before making commercial recordings, the group had been performing for a family-owned Decorated Electric Vehicle company since the oldest sister was nine years old.

Their first album, *Shining 3 Girls* (閃亮三姊妹同名專輯), was released in 2003, and by the time of the *Taike Rock Concert* in 2005, the group had released five albums. In addition to singing, the Shining 3 Sisters also acted. They appeared in the 2003 film *Here Comes a Black Dog* (黑狗來了), TV commercials, and a number of fashionable Taiwanese TV dramas (偶像

劇) which mainly targeted teenagers, such as *Say Yes Enterprise* (求婚事務所) and *They Kiss Again* (惡作劇 2 吻).



Figure 4.9 The CD cover of Shining 3 Girls

([http://www.watermusic.com.tw/front/bin/ptdetail.phtml?Part=history\\_cd\\_0006&Category=979](http://www.watermusic.com.tw/front/bin/ptdetail.phtml?Part=history_cd_0006&Category=979), accessed on 25/06/2016)

The performance style of the Shining 3 Sisters was strongly influenced by their experience as entertainers in Decorated Electric Vehicles Shows and, as was common with this type of show, the Shining 3 Sisters were famous for their sexy outfits. Glittering mini-skirts, crop tops and long boots were the trademark of the group. In addition, energetic, sexualised dances were essential to their performances. The style of the Shining 3 Sisters attracted the attention of an established Taiwanese Internet radio station, the [www.iwant-radio.com](http://www.iwant-radio.com), which described them as a “young, sexy, cute and lively”<sup>107</sup> pop group.

Their music had a distinctive style: straight-forward electronic sounds produced on synthesisers, computerised drum machines and other electronic musical instruments, with the

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<sup>107</sup> Introduction of the album *Shining 3 Girls*.

<http://www.iwant-radio.com/showinformation.php?sisn=8430> (accessed on 21/04/2016)

high energy rhythmic patterns of techno. The Taiwanese pop music critic, Lin Jian-tin (林建廷), has suggested that the Shining 3 Sister's music with its extensive use of Western techno music, is a by-product of globalisation. According to Lin, techno, rave and house, are seen as "popular, free, modern and advanced"<sup>108</sup> in Taiwan, and are mimicked by local Taiwanese artists to show their cosmopolitanism<sup>109</sup>. Lin also argues that Western techno music has been indigenised on the island of Taiwan. He used the Shining 3 Sisters as an example to illustrate how Taiwanese pop groups and artists adopted Western techno music as a model and how the music was altered and re-developed into a new genre, Taiwanese techno, by adding local elements such as slang to the lyrics.

Lin's theory of "indigenised Taiwanese techno"<sup>110</sup> is evident in most of their songs. The lyrics contained plenty of Taiyu words, and Shining 3 Sisters are well-known for their heavy Taiwanese accents when singing or speaking in Mandarin, making the sisters appear accessible and rooted in local society. Their lyrics are easy to understand, as they use only colloquial and slang terms. Take, for example, 'Give me a few seconds'<sup>111</sup> (給我幾秒鐘) (CD website link track 13):<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Lin, Jian-tin. 2005. 'The Cultural and Political Meaning of Taike Dance Music-Shining Three Sisters as an Example'. *Cultural Research Monthly*  
[http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/csa/journal/47/journal\\_park361.htm](http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/csa/journal/47/journal_park361.htm) (accessed 05 April 2009)

<sup>109</sup> Lin, Jian-tin. 2005. 'The Cultural and Political Meaning of Taike Dance Music-Shining Three Sisters as an Example'. *Cultural Research Monthly*  
[http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/csa/journal/47/journal\\_park361.htm](http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/csa/journal/47/journal_park361.htm) (accessed 05 April 2009)

<sup>110</sup> Lin, Jian-tin. 2005. 'The Cultural and Political Meaning of Taike Dance Music-Shining Three Sisters as an Example'. *Cultural Research Monthly*  
[http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/csa/journal/47/journal\\_park361.htm](http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/csa/journal/47/journal_park361.htm) (accessed 05 April 2009)

<sup>111</sup> Shining 3 Sisters. 2003. *Shining 3 Sisters*. CD. 23063221. Taipei: Water Music.

<sup>112</sup> Captu (2007). 給我幾秒鐘—閃亮三姊妹 [Shining 3 Sisters: 'Give me a few seconds']  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufi7eK1uEs4> (accessed on 25 June 2016)

Give me a few seconds (給我幾秒鐘)

行動電話響的時候	My mobile phone was ringing
在這個依然下著大雨的午後	On this rainy afternoon
你大笨頭大魔頭大芋頭大豬頭	You're a big silly head, big evil head, big taro head, big pig's head,
你又在騙我了	You're lying to me again.

(‘Give me a few seconds’<sup>113</sup> by Shining 3 Sisters: 2003; my translation)

The third line of these lyrics: “big silly head, big evil head, big taro head and big pig’s head” (Shinning 3 Sisters: 2003) are used to describe someone foolish in youth jargon. The inclusion of these memorable, humorous words in song lyrics was very popular with many people and attracted the attention of younger listeners and fans. Other examples of the Shining 3 Sisters’ songs were ‘Pearl Milk Tea’ (泡沫珍珠茶) and ‘I Will Be There by Your Side’ (給你靠):

Pearl milk tea (泡沫珍珠茶)

來一杯泡沫珍珠茶	Here comes a cup of bubble tea
兩雙手咱來牽作伴	Two pairs of hands entwined
珍珠是阮的感情	The pearl represents my love
給你永遠算袂清	For you forever

(‘Pearl Milk Tea’<sup>114</sup> by Shinning 3 Sisters: 2003; my translation)

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<sup>113</sup> Shining 3 Sisters. 2003. *Shining 3 Sisters*. CD. 23063221. Taipei: Water Music.

<sup>114</sup> Shining 3 Sisters. 2003. *Shining 3 Sisters*. CD. 23063221. Taipei: Water Music.



I will be there by your side (給你靠)

不要怕 不要怕	Don't be afraid, don't be afraid,
我給你靠	I will be there by your side
恐龍多多	There are too many dinosaurs
帥哥太少	Too few handsome men
王子不見了	And the Princes have all disappeared.

(‘I Will Be There by Your Side’<sup>115</sup> by Shining 3 Sisters: 2003; my translation)

These two songs show how young people’s language and daily issues are incorporated into Shining 3 Sisters’ lyrics. For instance, the use of word “dinosaur” to describe “an ugly person” (Shining 3 Sisters: 2003) is particularly used by young people. Pearl milk tea is a ubiquitous soft drink that originated in Taiwan and has proved extremely popular in Chinese-speaking societies. The conjunction of everyday life and language forms the Shining 3 Sisters’ distinctive style.

In their musical style, the Shining 3 Sisters do not fully imitate Western styles of techno. Lin (2005) compares their music with Western House music, concluding that the major difference between the two genres is the tempo; the Shining 3 Sisters’ songs were much slower in tempo compared with mainstream House music. Lin suggests that the Shining 3 Sisters’ performance style emphasises not only dance rhythms but also singing. Their songs must be ‘sing-able’, as this was an important element in Taiwanese pop music culture. Singing and dancing at the same time explain the slow tempo of the Shining 3 Sisters’ songs (Lin 2005: 42).

The Shining 3 Sisters were often associated with Taikex culture in the media. Xing News (星報), for example, published a series of reports on Taikex culture in 2003. The Shining 3

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<sup>115</sup> Shining 3 Sisters. 2003. *Shining 3 Sisters*. CD. 23063221. Taipei: Water Music.

Sisters and their music were introduced in an article entitled: The Modern Taike: The Music Chapter. The voices of Shining 3 Sisters seduce the island of Taiwan (現代台客錄 樂音篇 閃亮三姊妹 魅聲惑台):

the Shining 3 Sisters are the representative group of the modern Taike music... both their lively tempo and Taiyu lyrics have made them so Taike (真的好台客)! And the legendary Shining 3 Sisters are indeed the idol of the Taike Tribe (台客族). Cute and energetic images of these 3 sisters have driven Taike crazy! (my translation) <sup>116</sup>

The article suggested that a specific genre – electronic music together with Taiyu lyrics – was ‘modern Taike music’, and emphasised that Taike Techno music was an indigenised, distinctively Taiwanese style:

The pop market in Taiwan is flooded with foreign music. However, our Taike Tribe has developed a new kind of music that belongs to our native Taike culture. The best-known Taike music is ‘Taike Techno’ (台客電子音樂) or ‘Taike electronic music’. Taike Techno music differs from Western Techno. Artists/singers rearrange and alter existing Mandarin pop songs using digital or electronic technology...Taike Techno has proved popular in discos [where Taike often meet/dance] (my translation).<sup>117</sup>

The music of the Shining 3 Sisters can be described as a development of the early Taike Techno songs that were fashionable in discos. Another very important characteristic of the Shining 3 Sisters was that, instead of singing cover versions, they composed new, original songs, repackaged and targeted at a new group of listeners. The Shining 3 Sisters were voted the most ‘Tai’ (最台) entertainers, due to their appearance, clothes and electronic dance music. They are well liked by their young teenager fans.

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<sup>116</sup> Huang, Huang, Chao and Chen (2003), “The Modern Taike: The Music Chapter. The voices of Shining 3 Sisters seduce the island of Taiwan”. *Xing News*. 17 February 2003.

<sup>117</sup> Huang, Huang, Chao and Chen (2003), The Modern Taike: The Music Chapter. The voices of Shining 3 Sisters seduce the island of Taiwan. *Xing News*. 17 February 2003.

The Taiké Rock Concert of 2005 reached its climax when Wu Bai (‘Five Hundred’) and his band, China Blue, joined in. Wu Bai is the stage name of a well-known Taiwanese rock star, Wu Junlin (吳俊霖) who began his singing career by forming a short-lived band named Buzz in the early 1990s (Chung 2000). In 1992, two of his songs, ‘Lighting a Cigarette’ (點煙) and ‘Dust of Angels’ (少年也，安啦！) featured on the soundtrack of a native Taiwanese Taiyu film *Dust of Angels*, which was based on a novel of the same name by the Taiwanese writer, Wu Danru (吳淡如) that discussed youth and gang problems in Taiwanese society as well as the conflict between the pristine countryside and bustling city.

The soundtrack of *Dust of Angels* contained one instrumental rock piece and nine Taiyu songs by various composers including Lin Chiang (林強), Baboo and Wu Bai. The lyrics of the songs used in *Dust of Angels* echo the storyline of the film, which is local and rough (草根味). The modern, soft rock-style melody provides a strong contrast with the theme and lyrics. For example, in Wu Bai’s song, ‘Dust of Angels’ (CD website link track 14),<sup>118</sup> the lyrics consist of dialogue between an old and a young gangster. The youngster speaks of his sadness and helplessness regarding his vagrant life, and the elder comforts him by telling him Young man, you’ll be alright! (少年也，安啦！) The language of this particular song is in Taiyu, as are all of the songs on this soundtrack. As Taiyu was still considered a vulgar language at the time, its use provides a sense of roughness and toughness. In addition, local elements were also added to the lyrics. For instance, the young gangster describes how he feels about his life in two sentences:

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<sup>118</sup> Rock Record (2012). 伍佰 Wu Bai & China Blue 【少年也，安啦！ Dust of angels】 Official Music Video [Wubai and China Blue: ‘Dust of Angels’. Official Music Video] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YspEQ7pIV0E> (accessed on 16 June 2016)

敢是我的命像一支草	I wonder whether my whole life (destiny) is like a useless weed.
安怎打拼攏無比人較豪	No matter how hard I fight, I'm no better than other people
甘是我自己讀不夠冊	Is it a punishment for dropping out of school?
還是環境害我自己不知在佢位	Or it is my background and upbringing?

(‘Dust of Angels’<sup>119</sup> by Wu Bai and China Blue: 1992; my translation)

In Taiwan, belief in fate and destiny is widespread, especially in rural areas where people often believe that one’s fate is fixed from birth and can never be changed, no matter what one does. The term ‘useless weed’ is often used to describe people’s resentment of the poor environment into which they were born, which makes them feel left out and despised by mainstream society. It is common to blame their fate on a lack of education and a cruel society that has no place for their lowly existence.

The slow melody of the song is accompanied only by an electric guitar and drums. The rhythm is steady and the voice of Wu Bai is rough and often high pitched, which expresses the lyrics better. Casually dressed, Wu Bai, with his unusual long hair, attracted young people’s attention. His contemporary soft rock compositions with Taiyu lyrics offered his listeners a new style of music and gained him recognition. He was nominated for Best Film Soundtrack at the annual Golden Horse Film Festival Awards in 1992 (Taiwan Cinema Note: 2001) which has been the most prestigious prize in Taiwan for domestic and Chinese language films since 1962 (Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival and Awards: 2007).

Wu Bai’s first album, called *Loving Others is a Happy Thing* (愛上別人是快樂的事), was released by Pony Canyon in the same year as *Dust of Angels* (1992). At that time, Wu Bai

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<sup>119</sup> Rock Record (2012). 伍佰 Wu Bai & China Blue 【少年吔，安啦！ Dust of angels】Official Music Video [Wubai and China Blue: ‘Dust of Angels’. Official Music Video] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YspEQ7pIV0E> (accessed on 16 June 2016)

and three other musicians formed a band called China Blue. Soon after the album *Loving Others is a Happy Thing* was first released in Taiwan, Wu Bai and China Blue started performing in pubs, especially in the Gate and Live Ago-go in Taipei city. Their audiences mainly consisted of young people and college students. Various albums were released and, throughout the years, Wu Bai and the group have performed at numerous concerts in Chinese-speaking countries, including Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, China and Hong Kong. With his heavy Taiwanese accent and rough look, Wu Bai projects an image of an archetypal Taike in both his music and film roles: but it is a very contemporary, 'cool' re-imagining of Taike.

The *Taike Rock Concert* was formed to find the voice of Taiwan, as Wu Bai stated during an interview with the Taiwanese journalist, Mao Ya-fen:

I want my music to be full of Taiwanese flavour and freshness...I aim to find the unique rhythm of Taiwan (Mao 2006: 50).

Musically, a variety of different music genres were adopted to express Taike culture of at the concert. Shining 3 Sisters and Wu Bai both indigenised their very different styles of music by adding local features to a Western framework. The Taiwanese flavour is revealed through the language, slang, the performance style of the Decorated Electric Vehicle Shows and the inclusion of everyday elements in lyrics. The music of the *Taike Rock Concert* is a "copying, mix and match",<sup>120</sup> which, according to Lee Ming-tsung, a Taiwanese university lecturer, is the main characteristic of Taike culture itself.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Chang, Shih-lun (張世倫). 2006. 'Who Are You Calling "Taike"?' (Translated from Chinese by Scott Gregory). *Taiwan Panorama*.  
[http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show\\_issue.php?id=200669506085E.TXT&table=2&cur\\_page=1&distype=](http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show_issue.php?id=200669506085E.TXT&table=2&cur_page=1&distype=)  
(accessed 13 April 2015)

<sup>121</sup> Chang, Shih-lun (張世倫). 2006. 'Who Are You Calling "Taike"?' (translated from Chinese by Scott Gregory). *Taiwan Panorama*.  
[http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show\\_issue.php?id=200669506085E.TXT&table=2&cur\\_page=1&distype=](http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show_issue.php?id=200669506085E.TXT&table=2&cur_page=1&distype=)  
(accessed 13 April 2015)

In 2006, the year following the Taike Rock Concert, an album called *Standing up for Taike* (台客站起來) was released, which contained the songs performed at the concert, rearranged into a form of electronic dance music. The *since* headlines reported the concert for three consecutive days, discussing Wu Bai's thoughts on Taike, and interviews with their fans and performance partners. In addition, other publications included a book called *Call Me Taike* by Net and Books and a literary intellectual magazine entitled *The Republic of TK is Coming?* (Yang 2008: 202). The combination of the concert, the albums and the media focus and related publications subsequently contributed to the success of the marketing campaigns, giving new life to Taike culture.

However, the transformation of Taike from an ethnic slur to a fashionable subculture has not been without controversy. He Donghong, a Taiwanese music critic and assistant professor, has argued that the *Taike Rock Concert* is purely a commercial event. He points out that Taike is a working-class youth culture from central and southern Taiwan. The music performed at the concert merely repackaged the Taike phenomenon which had long existed and been ignored by polite society and “no new musical possibilities were uncovered”<sup>122</sup> within the new musical movement of Taike.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how a new Taiwanese identity was constructed through the re-signifying of Taike culture during the 2000s. I started with a historical analysis of a unique cultural phenomenon on the island, the Decorated Electric Vehicle Show (電子花車

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<sup>122</sup> Chang, Shih-lun (張世倫). 2006. ‘Who Are You Calling “Taike”?’. (Translated from Chinese by Scott Gregory). *Taiwan Panorama*.  
[http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show\\_issue.php?id=200669506085E.TXT&table=2&cur\\_page=1&distype=](http://www.taiwanpanorama.com/en/show_issue.php?id=200669506085E.TXT&table=2&cur_page=1&distype=)  
= (accessed on 13 April 2015)

秀), to illustrate understandings of Taike culture. These shows are closely connected to the everyday life of rural communities where long-established traditions are still maintained. *Renaos* – a lively, busy and prosperous atmosphere – is required for the majority of occasions in Taiwanese society. To create such an effect, the Decorated Electric Vehicle show emphasises its visual and aural aspects. The bold-coloured neon lights, sexy outfits of the singers and strippers, and loud singing of Taiyu songs and dance to rave techno music are all essential for the show. The Decorated Electric Vehicle Shows involve mocking, mixing and matching foreign elements with local language and meanings, creating a distinctive local culture, one that is seen as vulgar and unwelcome by the social elite.

During the late 1990s, the band LTK Commune, which was formed by a group of young elite men, made the first attempt to challenge the political and social norms through drawing on this low class Taike culture. Yang Fang-chih notes that the low class status of Taiwanese language and culture is a product of KMT rule, and the Nationalist government privileged Mainlanders through suppressing the native groups of Taiwan politically, culturally and economically (Yang 2008: 206). Therefore, the elevation of Taike culture was a directly political attack on Chinese nationalism. However, the band's offensive language and obscene scenes were too extreme to gain widespread popularity, and the embracing of Taike as a part of the Taiwanisation movement did not spread until five years later, when Wu Bai was able to argue that Taike was a way to celebrate the individuality, uniqueness, and the creativity of Taiwanese people and society. Taike was now a representation of the self-identity and self-confidence of Taiwanese people:

Taike is an “idea” that can be believed and embraced. Believing in Taike or embracing Taike is a representation of self-confidence. In addition, Taike can be a future that we look forward to (Mao 2006: 51).

Following its rise to power, the DPP promoted Taiwanisation on a large scale, and employed indigenisation in an attempt to foster Taiwanese nationalism. This political ideology that stressed the value local culture led to this urban musical movement – the new Taïke – that adopted the stereotypes of low-status Taiwanese culture and celebrated them. While it is also evident that “the concept of Taïke is a brand-name promoted by the market forces” (Liu, *China Times* 22 Aug 2005), and the commercial forces of the music industry have made the discourse of Taïke a norm, the Taïke trend provides clear evidence of the way that Taiwanese popular culture is directly influenced by the political sphere.



## Chapter 5: Chthonic – Heavy Metal as Soft Power

Every summer since its inception in 2005, the Heavy Metal Bloodstock Open Air Festival attracts a number of bands and thousands of fans from around the world to gather in Catton Hall in Walton-on-Trent, England. In 2012, a Taiwanese band called Chthonic (閃靈) participated in the festival. Before its performance, the lead singer of the band, Freddy Lin, briefly expressed his opinion about the name ‘Chinese Taipei’ that the Taiwanese team used for the London Olympic Games which took place in London a month before the heavy metal festival. Lin said to the audience:

While the whole world celebrates the Olympics, I don’t know how you feel, to find out that there is no Taiwanese team. Our team, our national team, is called ‘Chinese Fucking Taipei’. Fucking bullshit, right?

[The audiences cheered. Lin continued:]

Yes. Because of pressure from the Chinese Communists, the Olympic Committee just went like, “Oh, we can’t call you Taiwan, sorry, we have to call you Chinese Fucking Taipei”<sup>123</sup>.

Before Freddy Lin finished his proclamation, a number of people in the audience started to shout “Taiwan! Taiwan! Taiwan!” Lin’s short statement ended with him saying, “Thank you. This film is gonna be sent right back to Taiwan, and all the Taiwanese will feel you are passionate about Taiwan!”

This was a reflection in the cultural sphere of Taiwan’s continuing struggles over international diplomacy, since it was still not formally recognised as a full member of the international community of nations. But why would a UK-based heavy metal festival be a forum for airing Taiwanese nationalist statements? In his study of Taiwan’s contemporary

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<sup>123</sup> Chthonic (2012), *CHTHONIC - We are Taiwan, not Chinese fucking Taipei*. Bloodstock 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cb2ZV1uwF1I> (accessed on 16 June 2016)

political and cultural identity, Gold suggests that Taiwan has been constantly under the Chinese shadow. In addition to the geographical threat and the shadow of Chinese nationalism, the main challenge that Taiwan now faces is its international diplomatic difficulties as China tries to keep Taiwan out of international organisations (Gold 1993: 169–183).

In this chapter I look at how international setbacks and challenges have motivated the DPP to renew Taiwan's international image since its victory in the presidential election in 2000. In her study of the culture and identity of Taiwan, Chang Bi-yu suggests that the island has been re-branded by the DPP for the international market (Chang 2006: 201). Instead of promoting mainstream Chinese cultural heritage, the DPP claimed cultural ownership of the island's hybrid culture, emphasising its distinctive contemporary and indigenous mix (Chang 2006: 196-197; 202-203). The government's new ideological and cultural policies, which focused on modernity, indigenisation and hybridity, evoked responses from various communities in Taiwanese society, including the Taiwanese music industry.

In 2007, the Taiwanese heavy metal band Chthonic (閃靈) embarked on a sixty-five day long world tour. It was entitled Taiwan Unlimited and was sponsored by the DPP government who intended, in part through the music of Chthonic, to draw the attention of the world to Taiwan, which had just lost its bid to re-join the UN in July of that year. It is understandable that soft power was brought into play when Taiwan was seeking support from other countries during a political setback, however, the fact that a heavy metal band was part of this effort is intriguing, since such musical expression is generally viewed as being either apolitical or associated with youth rebellion and an anti-government stance (Weinstein 2000: 1–3). In addition, heavy metal in Taiwanese society is a musical genre that has far less appeal than Mandopop. So why did the DPP attempt to promote its political position through this musical genre? How did heavy metal come to be harnessed in the service of government policy?

## 5.1 Soft Power as Taiwan Power?

The concept of soft power was first introduced by an American political scientist Joseph Nye in his 1990 book, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. The word power, according to Nye, is “the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes you want” (Nye 2004a: 2). Under conditions of globalisation and modernity, Nye divides a country’s power into two categories: hard power and soft power. Hard power, is a coercive ability which is developed out of a country’s military or economic forces, and it is a power that can rest on inducements (carrots) or threats (sticks). Soft power lies in the ability to attract or to shape the preferences of others (Nye 2004a: 5). Nye explains that, “soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument, though that is an important part of it. It is also the ability to attract, and attraction often leads to acquiescence” (Nye 2004:6). In other words, soft power is a tool to get “others to want the outcomes that you want ... [it] co-opts people rather than coerces them” (Nye 2004b: 5).

Political leaders already have extensive understanding of the impact of hard power (military and economic power). However, soft power is equally important as it also has the ability to achieve one’s purpose by affecting the behaviour of others. When soft power is exercised, “ [a] country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because of other countries – admiring its value, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness – want to follow it” (Nye 2004a: 5).

According to Nye, a country’s soft power rests on three resources: culture, political values or ideology, and foreign policies (Nye 2011: 84). These three resources are often closely related. In the United States, the country has long promoted the universalisation of liberalism, and individual freedom and rights (Chua 2012: 120). The promotion of liberalism by America is reflected in its foreign policies, including its immigration laws. It is well-known that America’s purported openness to all races and religious tolerance was a vital part of its appeal

to potential immigrants. Furthermore, American popular culture remained an important resource for its soft power. In Nye's words, culture is a, "set of values and practices that create meaning for society" (Nye 2004a: 11). He identifies two different cultures in American society: high culture and popular culture. High culture includes literature, art and education, while popular culture, for Nye, centres on mass entertainment (Nye 2004a: 11). Chua notes that the US is the world's number one exporter of popular culture (Chua 2012: 120). Its films, music and television programmes are distributed worldwide, and have created the US as an image of freedom and modernity, persuading people to "want to partake in the good life American-style" (Nye 2004a: 12).

In his study of Japan's international relations, Jagannath Panda recognises that the use of culture as a soft power is important in conducting diplomacy (Panda 2010: 35).. Because of Japan's peaceful constitution, cultural diplomacy was seen as the best way to help others to understand and engage with Japan (Panda 2010: 49–51). In order to widen its reach internationally, Japan has established educational institutes to promote the Japanese language. State-sponsored Japan Foundations work as cultural agencies to introduce the culture of Japan in various countries (Panda 2010: 50). However, unlike the USA, which has heavily invested in its popular culture and acquired it as a tool in diplomacy, promoting contemporary Japanese pop culture in international market was not a focus for either the authorities or producers before the late 2000s.

Although there is evidence that Japanese pop culture, such as television dramas, manga cartoons and popular music, has been regionally and internationally influential since the 1990s, the popular culture of Japan was not promoted internationally by Japanese officials. Instead, Japanese popular culture was popularised in Taiwan and Hong Kong through illegal means (Chua 2012: 121–125). In 2002, the American journalist, Douglas McGray looked at the role of Japanese youth culture, such as manga comics, film, fashion and J-pop, and highlighted the

significance of Japan's valuable soft power. He discussed on the possibility of reinventing superpower (McGray 2002) to promote Japanese pop culture and to expand its cultural influence overseas despite the economic and political problems that Japan was experiencing (McGray 2002). Since the late 2000s, McGray's concept of Japan's Gross National Cool (McGray 2002) has been adopted by the Japanese government. The popular culture of Japan has been officially recognised as a superpower by the authorities and as an essential resource that may assist the country in improving its national image (Chua 2012: 124–126). The government's change of attitude has helped to develop trade bodies both at home and overseas.

In the case of modern Taiwan, culture has functioned as a tool in international diplomacy since the Second World War. Nancy Guy's study of Peking Opera and politics in Taiwan shows how Peking opera, which was seen as an authentic Chinese national opera, was adopted in the search for international recognition of Taiwan by the KMT government (Guy 2005: 43–61). Since the early twentieth century in China, Peking opera was developed as a national essence and was identified as one of the finest cultural icons of the country to present to the foreign gaze. Such acts were seen as necessary when the country faced military and political defeats by European and Japanese forces, which feelings of national inferiority were raised (Guy 2005: 44). The aims of developing such national art forms were to boost recognition of Chinese culture, and to strengthen the image of China internationally (Guy 2005: 43–52). Several Peking Opera performers took on cultural ambassadorial roles. One of the most well-known was Mei Lanfang (1894–1961). Mei and his troupe were sponsored by the KMT authorities – who were then in power in China – to entertain foreign audiences both in China and overseas. In 1930, Mei Lanfang and his troupe made a tour of the United States in order to disseminate Peking opera. The music and all other details of Mei's performances were carefully arranged and prepared. Mei's performances were well received by the Americans. When China was in the state of self-doubt due to political setbacks during the early twentieth century, such foreign

appreciation for the country's cultural product was extremely meaningful for audiences at home (Guy 2005: 47–52).

Since the KMT retreat to Taiwan in the late 1940s, both the opposing governments, in the Republic of China in Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, claimed to be the rightful government of all of China (Guy 2005: 53). To establish diplomatic ties and to consolidate their legitimacy and positions internationally, both Chinese administrations promoted Peking opera as a cultural icon, and sponsored tours overseas (Guy 2005: 53). However, when the Cultural Revolution was launched in China in early 1966, traditional Chinese culture was forbidden as Maoists pursued to destroy everything associated with Old China; and Peking opera was among those items that were banned by the authorities. The ferocious attacks on traditional Chinese culture in this period were seen an opportunity by the Nationalist government in Taiwan. Overseas Peking opera tours promoted the image of Taiwan as the defender of “authentic” Chinese culture, and Taiwan's traditional Peking opera signified the Republic of China in Taiwan as the guard of traditional and authentic Chinese culture (Guy 2005: 57).

After its diplomatic defeats in the 1970s, the Republic of China in Taiwan lost its position on the world political stage, and gained no recognition from its significant others, i.e. the major world powers (Chang 2006: 197). During the 55 years of KMT rule since the late 1940s, the island of Taiwan had been represented as a region of China by the Nationalist regime. When the DPP won the presidential election in 2000 for the first time, the new government aimed to bring about a profound shift in the identity of the country. President Chen Shui-bian emphasised the idea of building up the nation on the base of culture, and attempted to form a Cultural Taiwan poles apart from the KMT's construction of Chinese Taiwan (Chang 2006: 187–188). Rawnsley notes that “the domestic political environment plays a particularly influential role in determining Taiwan's soft power strategies” (Rawnsley 2014: 162).

Since the early 2000s, a series of cultural constructions began to take place domestically and internationally which aimed to present the world with a new image of Taiwan as a fresh cultural state (Chang 2006: 197). To make Taiwan more visible on the international stage, soft power was exercised (Rawnsley 2014: 161–174). During his eight years in power, Chen Shui-bian and his DPP government adopted a marketing approach to ‘branding Taiwan’ (Chang 2006: 197) which focused on invented traditions and innovative ideas. The Nationalists’ strategy of bringing traditional Chinese art to the transnational stage was replaced by a set of narratives that the DPP authorities felt might appeal to foreign spectators who were mostly unacquainted with Taiwan (Chang 2006: 197).

## **5.2 The Formation of Chthonic**

The name of the band ‘Chthonic’ is of Greek origin, and means ‘gods of the underworld’, a name which implied the cultural and political underground of Taiwanese society in the 1990s (Hsu and Sargent 2008: 42). Formed in 1995 by Freddy Lin (林昶佐), who was a university student at the time, together with his classmates from high school and college, the heavy metal band Chthonic became active in Taiwanese society. Born into a middle class family, Freddy Lin learnt the guitar and piano at young age and developed interests in rock music in junior high school in the late 1980s. In the mid-1990s, when Lin was studying at university, he was introduced to heavy metal music, which was not popular in Taiwan at the time. His fascination with heavy metal brought Freddy Lin to set up a band of his own (Chu 2001: 14–18). In Chthonic, Freddy Lin aimed to create a style that was different from Western heavy metal music and would become a unique feature of the band. The band did experiments by blending Taiwanese local elements, such as traditional myths and musical instruments, with their heavy metal compositions. The distinct musical style of Chthonic attracted fans worldwide and the band enjoys fame both internationally and domestically.

However, the international recognition of Chthonic could not have been achieved without the development of Taiwan's independent music industry. The boom in non-mainstream (非主流) music in Taiwan during the 1990s assisted the development of Freddy Lin's student band. In his study of the articulation of popular music and politics in Taiwan, Ho Tung-hung claims that three crucial elements provided the infrastructure for the independent music scene in Taiwan: small and independent records companies, gigs, and music festivals (Ho 2007: 40). Since the late 1980s, a number of independent and small records companies have been established in Taiwan which created opportunities for small-scale bands and independent musicians. Crystal Music (水晶有聲出版社) was one of the most well-known Taiwanese independent music labels. Since its establishment in 1987, Crystal Music has focused on producing records for non-mainstream musicians and bands.

In her study of Taiwanese independent music history, Jian Miao-Ru defines the term non-mainstream music in Taiwan during the 1980s as music that "was produced in the manner which does not appeal to major record companies" (Jian 2013: 111). However, Crystal Music challenged such conceptions of non-mainstream music in Taiwanese society with the slogan "Crystal operates beyond the vulgar" (俗媚之外, 還有水晶) (Chao: 1995: 110). To emphasize the uniqueness and creativity of their independent musicians, Crystal Music described mainstream Mandopop as vulgar in their marketing strategy. They promoted such music not only through producing records, but also through organising small music festivals and publishing a music magazine *The Rocker* (搖滾客) which introduced domestic and overseas rock bands to Taiwanese audiences and music fans. A number of musicians and bands that worked with Crystal Music later became well-known, including Chthonic who released their first album with Crystal Music in 1999.



In addition, Live Houses (展演空間) in Taipei offered an essential platform for Taiwan's independent music to be performed. The early Live Houses in Taiwan worked like British pubs, providing small-scale, informal live musical performances. A Live House normally provides a stage, lighting and sound equipment and is often operated at a far lower cost than the major concert halls, and so is usually the best choice for independent musicians or small-scale bands with a small budget to hold their concerts. The Live Houses in Taiwan opened new channels for various kinds of audiences and musicians.

The culture of going to a Live House is not unique to Taiwan, as they are also popular among independent musicians in Japan. In his study of Japanese Noise (hard-core, experimental music and extreme rock), David Novak notes that in Japan, the culture of Live Houses was crucial for the survival of underground music (Novak 2013: 33–36). Japanese Live Houses were usually small in space, and the energetic and crowded feeling' of Live Houses in Japan created an enclosed, dense and focused atmosphere, where the volume, the power and the emotion in Noise could be fully appreciated (Novak 2013: 34). In recent years, Taiwanese Live Houses have become a space where small exhibitions and musical gigs are held. One of the most popular Live Houses in Taiwan is the *The Wall* (這牆), which was established in 2003 in Taipei by three rock singers, including Freddy Lin.<sup>124</sup>

In the spring of 1995, two Americans living in Taiwan set up a large-scale music festival named Spring Scream (春天吶喊) in Kenting, a city at the southern tip of the island of Taiwan. More than twenty Taiwanese underground music bands participated in the festival. The act of establishing this festival was crucial for spreading the word about the independent music boom in the mid-1990s in Taiwan. In the following year another major music festival named Formoz (野台開唱) was organised by a student society named Northern Taiwan's College Rock

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<sup>124</sup> The Wall official Website. <http://thewall.tw/about> (accessed on 27 June 2016)

Alliance (北區大專搖滾聯盟) (Ho 2007: 40). The Northern Taiwan's College Rock Alliance was formed by a group of university students from a number of colleges in Taipei who shared common interests in playing and writing rock music. In 1997 Freddy Lin accepted the position as the head of the society and began his expansion of The Northern Taiwan's College Rock Alliance (Luo 2000: 73). Both the organisation and the concert of Formoz were later reconstructed and renamed a number of times. The last Formoz concert was held in 2013.

Before his involvement in The Northern Taiwan's College Rock Alliance, Freddy Lin was already an active user of BBS (Bulletin Board System) which hosts a large number of virtual forums online. As an early form of Internet, the Taiwanese BBS is a platform where various kinds of information can be uploaded or downloaded and be discussed or distributed. It has been extremely popular among Taiwanese university students since the 1990s (Hsu 2012: 210). The largest BBS board in Taiwan is Professional Technology Temple (PTT 批踢踢實業坊) which was established by students of National Taiwan University at their student dorm in 1995. The PTT now has more than one million registered users, with over 150,000 users online during peak hours and every day more than 10000 discussions are posted.<sup>125</sup>

Back in the 1990s, Freddy Lin recognised the power and the influence of the online forum, and set up discussion groups for heavy metal and The Northern Taiwan's College Rock Alliance to promote the music and the organisation (Ho 2007: 40). In 1999, Freddy Lin announced the establishment of a new group called Taiwan Music Revolution Force (台灣音樂革命軍) on BBS, of which was expanded from Northern Taiwan's College Rock Alliance. As increasing numbers of independent music bands joined in, including Chthonic, LTK (see Chapter 4) and May Day (五月天), the Taiwan Music Revolution Force would later become what Ho called an "imagined independent music community" (Ho 2007: 40). The independent

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<sup>125</sup> PTT official Website. <https://www.ptt.cc/index.html> (accessed on 06 May 2016)

music industry has grown at a fast pace since then, and Freddy Lin has become one of its leading figures.

### **5.3 The Music and Performance Style of Chthonic**

The performing style of Chthonic shares many characteristics with the musical genre of black metal. Moynihan and Soderlind (2003: 10) describe black metal as a subgenre of heavy metal that started to develop in Scandinavia in the early 1990s. Norwegian bands such as Mayhem, Burzum and Imoorta are among the most well-known. The typical line-up consists of a drummer, a bassist, a rhythm guitarist, a lead guitarist, and a singer. As Weinstein explains, the musical style of heavy metal is highly focused on its “sonic power” (Weinstein 2000: 23). The sounds created by both the instruments and vocals must be loud, thick, heavy, and, above all, powerful.

Musically, black metal adopts the basic frame of classic heavy metal and develops out of this an intensified attitude and style. Black metal features extremely fast drumbeats, high treble guitar tones, rough, harsh, high-pitched vocals and screams to generate powerful sounds. The themes of black metal lyrics are also distinctive. In the early 1990s, a number of Norwegian black metal artists were associated with criminal controversies including church burnings, murders and suicides (Kahn-Harris 2007: 5). The lyrics of black metal music are full of darkness as they commonly deal with anti-Christianity and the promotion of Satanism together with, on occasion, fascism and racism (Kahn-Harris 2007: 4–5). Black metal lyrics are also inspired by epics and wars, and sometimes explore death and depression.

The original form of black metal has diverged into various styles. Symphonic black metal and folk black metal are varieties of traditional black metal music. As the names suggest, both symphonic and folk black metal artists have incorporated folk or classical elements into their

black metal compositions to create new fusions. In symphonic black metal, orchestral instruments, such as violins, cellos, and flutes, are adopted by composers aiming to achieve “beautiful” sounds (Moynihan and Soderlind 2003: xvi). The usage of folk instruments is important to some folk black metal artists, while others focus on song lyrics inspired by folklore and mythology. Black metal artists are often identified by their practice of wearing corpse paint, a practice which was started by the Norwegian band, Mayhem (Moynihan and Soderlind 2003: 36). This corpse paint is stylised, black-and-white makeup, aiming to create a dreadful, deathly appearance, and has become a characteristic of black metal bands (Moynihan and Soderlind 2003: 36).

In his study of heavy metal music, the British sociologist Keith Kahn-Harris describes this musical genre and its culture as “transgressive practices” (Kahn-Harris 2007:25-49). The sonic transgressions of heavy metal are presented through extreme sounds: shrieked, growled vocals, a loud, distorted guitar, dense drumbeats and forceful rhythms (Hecker 2011: 58). The subversiveness of heavy metal can also play out in more directly political spheres. The anti-social tendencies and the reception of black metal performance are observed by Pierre Hecker, who looks at how heavy metal musicians challenge Islamisation in Turkey (Hecker 2011: 55–84). Hecker notes that heavy metal musicians adopt not only transgressive musical elements but also visual means, such as displaying explicit sexual illustrations, or human and animal skulls, that aim to test moral or social boundaries (Hecker 2011: 58). Another extreme, controversial description of heavy metal performance is offered by the Polish journalist Tisdall, who describes a performance in Poland by Gorgoroth, a Norwegian heavy metal band, during which a number of sheep’s heads, naked people painted with sheep blood, Satanic symbols and

a large crucifix were displayed on stage. The band was later investigated by the police for cruelty to animals.<sup>126</sup>

Chthonic can be identified as a black metal band from their musical style as well as their image. Chthonic's songs feature fast drumbeats and bass lines, screaming vocals and discordant guitar riffs. Moreover, just like Mayhem, which is one of the most innovative Norwegian heavy metal bands, Chthonic emphasises the visual aspects of performance and adopts the practice of wearing corpse paint make-up on their faces during concerts and in photos. In addition, Chthonic captures the mysterious, dark imagery of heavy metal bands. With a touch of localism, 'paper money' (冥紙), which Chinese and Taiwanese people traditionally burn as an offering to the dead or to the underworld, is thrown to the audience by the band to create a gruesome atmosphere (CD website link track 15).<sup>127</sup>



Figures 5.1 Chthonic Wearing Corpse Paint

(<http://www2.scanews.com/2007/07/s883/88310/>, accessed on 26/06/2016)

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<sup>126</sup> Tisdall, Jonathan "Norwegian black metal band shocks Poland - Aftenposten.no". <http://educate-yourself.org/cn/norwegianblackmetalband04feb04.shtml> (accessed 20 September 2011)

<sup>127</sup> Tsuyoshi Tsai (2011). Chthonic 閃靈 - 鬼縛 [A typical live concert of Chthonic] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAo002kINR8> (accessed on 26 June 2016)

Chthonic has maintained the basic musical structures and practices of heavy metal. Nevertheless, the band is distinguished from their Western counterparts by the inclusion of local elements within their musical compositions and presentations. One of the characteristics of Chthonic's heavy metal is the regular incorporation of a traditional Chinese musical instrument, the *erhu*. This two-stringed fiddle is widespread in China. Jonathan Stock notes that, in early twentieth century China, the *erhu* was associated with beggars who played this particular instrument to beg for alms. The fiddle was also employed in music ensembles, Chinese opera, folksongs, ballads and regional dramas (Stock 1992:56-7), and today it is one of the most common instruments in national music ensembles in China and Taiwan. The Chinese *erhu* is a rather unconventional musical instrument for a heavy metal band; however, to Freddy Lin, it produces a mysterious, sorrowful sound and therefore is the perfect instrument with which to echo and express Taiwan's history.<sup>128</sup>

The band's albums are all inspired by well-known myths, legend and historical stories about the island of Taiwan. Their first album, *Where the Ancestors' Souls Gathered* (主靈之流), was released in 1999, four years after the formation of the band, while their second album, the *9th Empyrean* (靈魄之界) was released in 2000. Two years later, in 2002, *Relentless Recurrence* (永劫輪迴) was issued. For the first three albums Chthonic adopted Taiwanese history, myth and folk stories from the Chinese Qing Dynasty (1644–1912), which ruled Taiwan from 1683 until the island was ceded by the Chinese government to Japan after the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 (Brown 2008: 170). At the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, the majority of Taiwan's population were indigenous people, who had been resident on the island

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<sup>128</sup> Interview with Terrorverlag: Alternative Music Webzine-Chthonic (Freddy Lin)  
<http://www.terrorverlag.com/interviews/chthonic-freddy-lin/> (accessed on 20 September 2012)

since time immemorial. However, increasing numbers migrated from China to Taiwan throughout this period (Brown 2008: 163–164). The people who are ethnically Chinese are identified as Han (漢人) today (Brown 2008: 10). Although many Han men and indigenous women intermarried when the island was under the control of the Qing government, there were constant conflicts between the Chinese and Taiwanese aboriginal people.

Chthonic's first album, *Where Ancestors' Souls Gathered* (祖靈之流), described how the Han ancestors during the Qing Dynasty dreamed of a brighter future in Taiwan and the journey across the sea from China to Taiwan. The album consists of eight songs and the band presents the whole album as a musical suite. It opens with a solo *erhu* piece named 'Drift', which is followed by three main movements: 'Crossing the Sea' (越海), 'To Cultivate' (深耕), and 'The War' (聖戰). The band's second album, *9th Empyrean* (靈魄之界), is an expansion of the previous work. It comprises myths about the conflict between the Chinese Han and Taiwanese Aborigines. The first two songs of the *9th Empyrean* are shortened versions and repetitions of the first album and employed as an introduction to the second album.

The theme of the third album, *Relentless Recurrence* (永劫輪迴), is a widely-told folk story about a woman called Natao Ji in Taiyu, or Lintou Jie (林投姐) in Mandarin. The Natao Ji story is a tragic Taiwanese folktale, which describes how a Taiwanese woman was betrayed by her Chinese lover. He came to Taiwan as a stowaway under the strict immigration controls of the Qing Dynasty, and fled back to China after cheating her of her money and her virginity. Natao Ji decided to end her life and vowed to take revenge by remaining in the human world as a ghost. For this album, the band tried to create an atmosphere that was gloomy, dark and

mysterious. The first song of the album, ‘Nemesis’<sup>129</sup> (業) (CD website link track 16),<sup>130</sup> serves as the introduction to the story. It starts with a gong and is followed by the sound of reciting Buddhist scriptures (念經) which are often performed at funerals in Taiwan. The main melody, a repeated descending scale (C B A<sup>b</sup> F), is played by both the *erhu* and keyboard. While ‘Nemesis’ is lyrical and instrumental, the second song “Onset of Tragedy”<sup>131</sup> (CD website link track 17)<sup>132</sup> expresses the tragic story with powerful sounds: drums, bass and screaming voices. The main body of this song is based on the same musical scale as the introduction, ‘Nemesis’.

For the first three albums the majority of the Chthonic’s song lyrics were sung in Mandarin, although a few were sung in Taiyu. The manner in which the lyrics are written is another important feature of the band, as they are all written in the *dui-ju* (對句) literary form, whereby each couplet contains one line of direct meaning paired with a metaphor. They are written in classical Chinese (文言文), the literary language of China up to the twentieth century, and used today only on formal occasions or for conspicuous display. The band is also particular about using philosophical and elegantly ornate terms in their lyrics.

In 2006, Chthonic released the album named *Seediq Bale* (賽德克巴萊). The theme of this album was based on the historical Wushe Incident (霧社事件) in central Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period (1895–1945). In 1930 the Taiwanese Seediq indigenous group in Wushe held a major uprising against the colonial government’s suppression of indigenous people, resulting in the deaths of over a hundred and thirty Japanese. In response to this, the

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<sup>129</sup> Chthonic. 2002. *Relentless Recurrence*. CD. CHRR020409. Taipei: Ciong Zo Idea Corp.

<sup>130</sup> Show (2010) 業/閃靈 [Chthonic: ‘Nemesis’].  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0sgpM2dfvU&list=PLhLWkSWhgRwp0BH9\\_mbgVxVrIJ76lgSo5](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0sgpM2dfvU&list=PLhLWkSWhgRwp0BH9_mbgVxVrIJ76lgSo5)  
 (accessed on 26 June 2016)

<sup>131</sup> Chthonic. 2002. *Relentless Recurrence*. CD. CHRR020409. Taipei: Ciong Zo Idea Corp.

<sup>132</sup> Chthonic (2002). CHTHONIC- Onset of Tragedy [Chthonic: ‘Onset of Tragedy’]  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grfjDbRN4M0&index=2&list=PLhLWkSWhgRwp0BH9\\_mbgVxVrIJ76lgSo5](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grfjDbRN4M0&index=2&list=PLhLWkSWhgRwp0BH9_mbgVxVrIJ76lgSo5)  
 (accessed on 26 June 2016)



Japanese implemented a brutal crackdown, and killed over six hundred Seediq (Wang 2011: 122–139). In 2011, Chthonic released the band's sixth album named *Takasago Army* (高砂軍) which was also closely connected to the history of Japanese occupation in Taiwan. This album tells the story of the Takasago force of the Second World War, which were recruited from Taiwanese indigenous peoples, trained in guerrilla warfare and sent into the frontline to fight for their motherland, Japan.

Both of Chthonic's albums *Takasago Army* and *Seediq Bale* pointed to the colonial Japanese government's manipulation of Taiwanese people's identity. For *Takasago Army*, the band Chthonic created a character named Wubus, who was a descendent of the Seediq tribe. Although his family were killed by the Japanese during the Wushe Incident, he was brought up in the period of Japanisation and received a Japanese education. Like many other tribe members, Wubus was taught to be loyal to the Imperial Japanese government and had to abandon traditional practices such as facial tattoos that represented the Seediq spirit. After fighting for Japanese during the Second World War, Wubus started to experience an identity crisis in his heart.

The suppression of Taiwanese culture during the Japanese period is expressed in the video of the song 'Takao'<sup>133</sup> (皇軍) (CD website link track 18)<sup>134</sup> in *Takasago Army*, which features two women dressed in Japanese kimonos, with tattooed faces. The face tattoo is the most distinctive form of indigenous art of the Atayal tribe. Conventionally for a woman, a tattoo represented chastity before marriage, as well as recognition that her weaving skills were mature, so she was eligible for marriage (Wang 2002: 72). However, the custom of face tattooing was banned under Japanese colonisation. The video and the storyline of Chthonic's

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<sup>133</sup> Chthonic. 2002. *Takasago Army*. CD. CHTA1107. Taipei: Ciong Zo Idea Corp.

<sup>134</sup> Chthonic (2011). *CHTHONIC - TAKAO - Official Video*  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e\\_UkowmQs30](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_UkowmQs30) (accessed on 26 June 2016)

*Takasago Army* described a journey for the Taiwanese to explore their self-identity, and reflected on the value of life under colonisation by a foreign power.<sup>135</sup>

Musically, the band adopted traditional Taiwanese musical instruments in its heavy metal composition. To enrich their East Asian and Taiwanese musical flavour, Chthonic expanded its use of musical instrumentation by adding Japanese instruments such as *koto* (a plucked zither with thirteen strings), *shamisen* (a three-stringed plucked lute like the sanxian), *shakuhachi* (an end-blown bamboo flute), and Tibetan Buddhist bells.<sup>136</sup> *Takasago Army* also incorporated Taiyu pop songs that were popular in Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period (1895–1945). Taiyu pop music was strongly influenced by *enka* (演歌), as we saw in Chapter 1.2. Taking the song ‘Kaoru’<sup>137</sup> (薰空) (CD website link track 19)<sup>138</sup> as an example, in addition to its basis in heavy metal style, the band adopted a short passage of a well-known Taiyu song named ‘Returning Home Soon’ (望你早歸) and blended it in with their own composition. ‘Returning Home Soon’ was written in 1946 by a Taiwanese composer Yang Sanlang (楊三郎), and the song described a woman longing for her husband’s return. Like many other Taiwanese men, her husband was forced to fight in the frontline for Japan during the Second World War. Like ‘Returning Home Soon’, Chthonic’s ‘Kaoru’ was a sad love story. However, it was expressed in the heavy metal musical style, with harsh and loud voices; and the lyrics of the songs, instead of sentimental love, focused on blood and killing: the dark side of war.

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<sup>135</sup> Doris Yeh. 2011. “Oh! What are you talking about in 'TAKASAGO ARMY'? - The guide for CHTHONIC new album :)” on <https://www.facebook.com/notes/doris-yeh/oh-what-are-you-talking-about-in-takasago-army-the-guide-for-chthonic-new-album-/228039680568179/> (accessed on 10 May 2016)

<sup>136</sup> Doris Yeh. 2011. “Oh! What are you talking about in 'TAKASAGO ARMY'? - The guide for CHTHONIC new album :)” on <https://www.facebook.com/notes/doris-yeh/oh-what-are-you-talking-about-in-takasago-army-the-guide-for-chthonic-new-album-/228039680568179/> (accessed on 10 May /2016)

<sup>137</sup> Chthonic. 2002. *Takasago Army*. CD. CHTA1107. Taipei: Ciong Zo Idea Corp.

<sup>138</sup> Justin Chang (2011). *Chthonic - Kaoru*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6\\_C7EZ7b90](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6_C7EZ7b90) (accessed on 26 June 2016)

In addition to the history of the Japanese occupation (1895–1945), Chthonic's music also explored the history of Taiwan under Chinese Nationalist rule before the end of the martial law at the end of the 1980s. The album *Mirror of Retribution* was inspired by the 228 Incident (see Chapter 1.3), the major uprising of the late 1940s caused by ethnic conflicts between the Chinese and the Taiwanese. Chthonic's *Bû-Tik* (伍德) which was released in 2013 can be seen an extension of *Takasago Army*. The island of Taiwan was returned to China after Japanese was defeated at the end of the Second World War. However, those Taiwanese soldiers who fought for Japan had suddenly become traitors in the eyes of Chinese Nationalist government. The song 'Defenders of Butik Palace' (暮沉武德殿), for instance, talked about the story of Taiwanese soldiers who survived the Second World War as Japanese Imperial soldiers but were executed by the Kuomintang authorities during the White Terror era (see Chapter 1.3).

From my point of view, both Chthonic's heavy metal music, which works at re-imagining histories of violence and conflict, and mythologises new traditions (Lucas 2010: 48), and the work done by folk song singing are both part of building Taiwanese cultural identity. In her study of the construction of cultural identity in Scandinavian heavy metal music, von Helden notes that contemporary Scandinavian metal creates a new space for constructing cultural identity in northern Europe. Since the late 1980s, national and local cultural roots have become foci for heavy metal songwriters (von Helden 2010: 34). Although sonically there were few examples of using traditional musical elements to connect to national roots, instead interest in their ancestral roots is presented in song texts and the use of native languages (von Helden 2010: 34–38).

Instead of being associated with Satanism, the musicians stressed the Viking legacy of warfare, strength and freedom. Similarly, Lucas looks at national identity construction in English heavy metal compositions, and points out that ancient history and mythology which

“say who we are” (Lucas 2010:44), are often adopted to authenticate and legitimise nationalist objectives (Lucas 2010:44–45). In English black metal songs, contemporary songwriters often use three key elements to make up English black metal imagery: the depiction of nature, the character of warrior, and the use of a logo. Lucas suggests that the characters of the warrior are entangled in concepts of masculinity, heroism, violence and power (Lucas 2010: 48). The bond between the great historical warrior and the land represents the ideology of “blood and soil” (Lucas 2010: 45).

In the case of Chthonic, local cultural elements, such as the *erhu*, the references to mythology, and use of native language are used to emphasis Taiwan’s roots. Moreover, the depiction of nature and the character of the warrior are traits found in their music. A number of warriors and angry ghosts are created by Chthonic from different Taiwanese political eras: the ghostly spirit of Natao Ji of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912), the indigenous soldier Wubus from the Japanese colonial period (1895–1945) and the Taiwanese soldiers who were executed for treason by the KMT authorities. All these heroic warriors in the stories fought for Taiwan but were eventually killed or betrayed by their rulers, while their land was stolen by foreign powers. The music of Chthonic clearly expresses anger and disenfranchisement.

Since the band was established in the mid-1990s, its music has been constantly developing. One of the obvious changes is the use of language in the songs texts. For the first four albums, Mandarin was the main language of the lyrics. Although the band maintains the poetic-like writing style for the song lyrics, the use of Mandarin shifted to the Taiwanese dialect, Taiyu, with the release of *Mirror of Retribution* in 2009. An increasing number of Taiwanese elements have appeared in Chthonic’s music. The incorporation of old Taiyu popular songs for example, is an unusual practice in heavy metal song writing, and in the Taiwanese context it makes a direct political statement.

In their latest album, *Timeless Sentence* (失竊千年), released in 2014, Chthonic made a major shift in musical genre. Although it was apparent that the music was in the style of rock, the album was advertised as folk song (民謠) by Chthonic, and was translated as ‘acoustic’ music in English. The song ‘Takao’ (皇軍) uses keyboard, drums, *erhu* and vocalist, abandoning electric guitar and bass in favour of two acoustic guitars. The song uses a relaxed four-beat and is written in Taiyu. The image and performing style of the band also changed. The musicians did not wear make-up as they had previously. During an interview in *Behind the Scene of Chthonic’s Acoustic Music Video*,<sup>139</sup> the band explained the alterations to their music and performing style was to make their music more catchy and be more understandable and hopefully reach a wider audience.

Although Chthonic had become well-known through its heavy metal music and gained a large number of fans over the previous two decades, the change in music style did not seem to affect its popularity. Instead, its fans welcomed the fresh image of the band. In 2013 before the album *Timeless Sentence* was officially released, the band held three concert tours named *The Defenders of Bú-Tik Palace Unplugged* (武德殿不插电演唱) at historical sites in three major cities in Taiwan to promote its new folk songs; and the tickets were sold out shortly after their release. The press commented on Freddy Lin’s “pure and clean”<sup>140</sup> new folk singing style, and the album *Timeless Sentence* was widely discussed and received positive feedback on the online BBS forum.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Chthonic (2015). *Behind the Scene of Chthonic’s Acoustic Music Video*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2R5COFCOLY> (accessed on 10 May 2016)

<sup>140</sup> Zheng, Kairon. ‘MV is touching! Chthonic’s First Folksong Wind Album’. *New Talk*. 31 December 2013. <http://newtalk.tw/news/view/2014-12-31/55377> (accessed on 08 May 2016)

<sup>141</sup> Wu, Reizi. ‘Chthonic Sings Folksong. MV Attracts 70,000 audiences’. *ETtoday*. 02 January 2013. <http://star.ettoday.net/news/446509> (accessed on 10 May 2016)

Chthonic went on to gain international recognition as the first Taiwanese heavy metal band. In 2000, the band was invited to perform at the Fuji Rock Festival<sup>142</sup> in Japan as well as at the Wacken Open Air Festival in Germany. They were also the first Asian band to play in the Ozzfest<sup>143</sup> in 2007, a leading heavy metal festival that is held annually in the US and is internationally recognised by fans.<sup>144</sup> In 2007 alone, Chthonic performed at nearly ninety gigs abroad, in the US, Canada and Europe (Hsu 2006: 13). The Western exposure of the band has brought them fame in the field of heavy metal, and their music is reviewed in major European rock music publications, such as *Kerrang!* and *Terrorizer*. The Japanese rock magazine *Burrn!* also featured the group.

While Chthonic enjoys worldwide success, the band has also acquired a large number of fans at home. Ever since its formation in mid-1995, the virtual community on BBS has been a powerful tool for the band to promote its music and for fans to communicate. In recent years, the band has been followed by a large number of people on social media, such as Facebook, and its video clips on YouTube attract millions of clicks. Li Shao, who studied the music culture of heavy metal in Taiwan for his master degree thesis, has pointed out that while the heavy metal music is usually associated with working class young men, in Taiwan, the majority of the fans of Chthonic are university students (Li 2007: 95). And although the heavy metal fans in Taiwan are mainly male, the genre also attracts a number of loyal female students (Li 2007: 105).

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<sup>142</sup> The Fuji Rock Festival has been held annually in Japan since 1997 and is the largest outdoor music event in the country. The three-day festival is arranged by a local music (especially rock music) promotor, Smash Japan. It hosted more than two hundred Japanese and international musicians, and attracted 119, 000 fans to attend in 2008. [http://www.smash-uk.com/frf09/history\\_08.html](http://www.smash-uk.com/frf09/history_08.html) (accessed on 26 Feb. 2015).

<sup>143</sup> Ozzfest, a concert tour of twenty-four major American cities, was founded and is headlined by the British Heavy Metal musician: Ozzy Osbourne.

<sup>144</sup> Gao, Pat. 2008. 'UNlimited Band'. *Taiwan Review*. <http://taiwanreview.nat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=25065&CtNode=128> (accessed on 11 November 2009)

Li argues that the main reason why heavy metal music appeals to the educated young elite is because they can understand the music linguistically and socially. As most of the heavy metal music come from abroad, one has to overcome language and cultural barriers to be able to understand and appreciate it. Li also notes that the most of his respondents are aware of the association of heavy metal, and rebellious and anti-social attitudes in Western societies. By adopting these traits, the educated urban elite are able to express their critical thinking or anger towards their parents, the education system, or the political sphere, through heavy metal music (Li 2007: 92–100).

#### **5.4 Chthonic's Role in the Development of Taiwanisation and Taiwanese Nationalism**

In her study of the Taiwan's media, Hsu Chien-Jung emphasises the importance of cyberspace in the construction of national identity in Taiwan, especially during the 1990s. According to Hsu, a large number of Internet users believed that the mainstream Taiwanese media during the 1990s was still under the control of the Chinese Nationalist authorities despite the lifting of martial law in the late 1980s and the government's promotion of Taiwanisation. Because of this common misunderstanding, many Internet users decided to use cyberspace as a medium for resisting Chinese identity and constructing Taiwanese identity (Hsu 2012: 209).

As a consequence, the Internet has become a political battlefield in Taiwan. As an active Internet user, Freddy Lin promoted online not only Chthonic's music, but also the band's Taiwan-centred political opinions. In 1999, he made the BBS forum the virtual headquarters of the Taiwanese Music Revolution Force (see Chapter 4.2) where he gathered independent musicians who shared the same political views. In 2000, the members of this on-line community formed an organisation named Taiwan Rock Alliance (TRA, 全國搖滾聯盟). Led

by Freddy Lin, the TRA had held a number of large-scale concerts that emphasised the idea of Taiwan independence.

Since 2000, a concert called *Say No to China* (反中國併吞和平演唱會)<sup>145</sup> has been held in Taiwan annually (Ho 2007: 40), to demonstrate resistance to China in a peaceful way. It was established by Freddy Lin together with the Taiwan Rock Alliance (TRA, 台灣搖滾聯盟). The *Say No to China* concert is held for a number of purposes: to remember those who were affected by the 228 Incident (see Chapter 1.3) and, more importantly, to raise awareness of cross-straits political issues that are being suppressed by China. Finally, the concert supports Taiwanese independence (Hsu 2006: 13). As its title suggests, the concert was held to openly stand against China's military threats in Taiwan Strait.

The *Say No to China* concert also opened up the social issues of ethnic tensions between Taiwanese and Chinese that the island had experienced since the late 1940s. The 228 Incident, an anti-KMT uprising of 28 February 1949 which provoked the authorities to massacre and imprison thousands of civilians (Smith 2008: 143–144; also see Chapter 1.3), became a topic of discussion and musical reference. Hsu Chien-Jung suggests that, through evoking the collective memories of the 228 Incident, the concert attempted to establish a new self-identity shared by all Taiwanese people (台灣自我認同) (Hsu 2006: 46). Hsu's claim echoes Lee Teng-hui's slogan, A Community of Shared Fate (生命共同體), which he established in the mid-1990s when his government developed the Taiwanisation movement (Chang 2006: 189).

In 2003, Taiwan's fourteenth Taiwan Golden Melody Awards (金曲獎) (see section 5.3 in this chapter) took place in Taipei. Chthonic (閃靈) won the Best Band Award. As President

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<sup>145</sup> In 2000–2006, the concert was called *Say Yes to Taiwan, Say No to China*, and was renamed *Transitional Justice* in 2007 (Hsu 2014: 216). The aims of the concert from 2007 are to discuss topics such as democracy and human rights, not only in Taiwan but also in East Asia (Xiao and Yang 2012)



Chen Shui-bian handed the award to the band-leader, Freddy Lin, the latter declared, “This award is dedicated to my mother country, Taiwan, where all inspiration comes from”.<sup>146</sup> Next day, Freddy Lin’s short speech at the ceremony was discussed in many Taiwanese newspapers and on many pro-independence organisations’ websites, such as the World United Formosans for Independence (台灣獨立建國聯盟).<sup>147</sup> As the Golden Melody Award is a major popular music prize in the Chinese-speaking community, the ceremony was broadcast live in many other countries, such as Hong Kong and Singapore. Lin’s statement about the mother country (祖國), Taiwan, however, was edited out by some international media (Hsu 2005: 93), as it was considered an improper comment in countries such as Singapore.

In an interview with the *Taipei Times*, Freddy Lin discussed his acceptance speech at the awards ceremony:

I emphasized that Taiwan is my mother country (*zuguo*), not a home region (*jiexiang*), at the Golden Melody ceremony to illustrate my conviction that Taiwan has developed its own history and cultural values that are no longer the same as those that have developed in China.... To my pro-unification compatriots, Taiwan is only a geographical term, identifying its place on the global map, but Taiwan is a nation to me, with an independent people, culture and history<sup>148</sup>.

From Freddy Lin’s statement, it is clear that he believes that Taiwan should be an independent state, separate from China. His viewpoint conflicts with the One China policy that the KMT imposed on the island during its rule, but his perspective parallels the DPP’s political view of Taiwan.

After more than a decade of expressing the China-Taiwan conflict, Freddy Lin shifted his focus to human rights (Ho 2007: 43). In 2006, the TRA, led by Freddy Lin, organised a

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<sup>146</sup> <http://www.wufi.org.tw/initial.htm> (accessed on 17 March 2015)

<sup>147</sup> <http://www.wufi.org.tw/initial.htm> (accessed on 17 March 2015)

<sup>148</sup> ‘Chthonic put spin on Taiwan’s past’. *Taipei Times*, 14 September 2003.

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2003/09/14/2003067797/1> (accessed on 15 May 2016)

concert named *East-Core Asia* (台灣魂演唱會) that aimed to promote Taiwan as an outpost of human right and democracy in East Asia.<sup>149</sup> Both Taiwanese and international musicians and bands performed at the concert which was sponsored by the Taiwanese government. During the concert the audience was encouraged to think about the issues of human rights and democracy in East Asia, including the Taiwanese people's will and right to join the United Nations (Ho 2007: 43). It was apparent that Freddy Lin was promoting Taiwanese independence ideology throughout the music festival and the concert, constructing an image of Taiwan as a democratic nation and seeking international attention and support (Ho 2007: 44–45).

In 2007, Chthonic took a further step in promoting Taiwanese nationalism internationally. That year, the band was invited to perform at two major international heavy metal festivals: Ozzfest in the US and Wacken Open Air in Germany. The band's US concert in 2007 coincided with the opening of the UN General Assembly, at which Taiwan made its first attempt to re-join the UN under the name Taiwan rather than the Republic of China. The bid was rejected, and Chthonic embarked on a concert tour, starting with Ozzfest in the US and taking in other North American and European cities, to protest against the exclusion of Taiwan by the UN.

Chthonic's concert tour in 2007 was named *UNlimited Taiwan*. The band played more than eighty concerts on the tour, funded in part by the Taiwan Government Information Office (GIO) to promote Taiwan's efforts to enhance its international status.<sup>150</sup> The government's support for the heavy metal genre did not seem to raise many questions in Taiwan; the

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<sup>149</sup> Ministry of Culture. 'East-core Asia Concert'. 22 February 2006.  
[http://www.moc.gov.tw/information\\_250\\_16318.html](http://www.moc.gov.tw/information_250_16318.html) (accessed on 17 May /2016)

<sup>150</sup> Gao, Pat. 2008. 'UNlimited Band'. *Taiwan Review*.  
<http://taiwanreview.nat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=25065&CtNode=128> (accessed on 11 November 2009)

Taiwanese mass media focused instead on the concerns held by many Taiwanese popular music singers: the Chinese market.<sup>151</sup>

In recent years, most of Taiwan's big media corporations and music industry have shifted to a pro-China position due to China's huge and growing markets (Ho 2007: 41). Some Taiwanese popular singers have been banned from entering or performing in China; A-mei, for example, was banned because of her performance at Chen Shui-bian's presidential inauguration ceremony (see Chapter 1). As it was directly linked to economic considerations, not many Taiwanese performers would risk their own careers and perform for such a politically sensitive campaign. Only Chthonic, who believed that music should act as a collective voice of the Taiwanese people who are entirely entitled to express their voices to the world, was willing to make a stand. Moreover Freddy Lin stressed that he felt honoured and proud to be able to speak out for Taiwan. His band was already well-known internationally and it had no interest in establishing itself in the Chinese mass market.<sup>152</sup>

Chthonic also explained the motivation behind their tour on their website:

We want to emphasise the 'unlimited' potential of Taiwan and the Taiwanese people... Hopefully, more and more international friends will understand and support Taiwan through the 'unlimited' power of music.<sup>153</sup>

Chthonic's direct pro-independence political message was promoted during the concert tour *UNlimited Taiwan*. The theme song, 'Unlimited Taiwan', sung in English, was composed by Lin specifically for the tour. Although they are completely incomprehensible in performance

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<sup>151</sup> Wu and Wu. 'Chthonic's Tour for Taiwan'. *Apple Daily*. 20 June 2007.

<http://www.appledaily.com.tw/appledaily/article/headline/20070620/3575262/> (accessed on 17 May 2016)

<sup>152</sup> Wu and Wu. 'Chthonic's Tour for Taiwan'. *Apple Daily*. 20 June 2007.

<http://www.appledaily.com.tw/appledaily/article/headline/20070620/3575262/> (accessed on 17 May 2016)

<sup>153</sup> <http://chthonic.org/unlimited/> (accessed on 10 November 2014)

due to the black metal vocal style, the lyrics are unequivocally in the tradition of protest song, now aimed at the UN on behalf of the Taiwanese people:

Limited vision, limited union;

Unlimited division, unlimited illusion;

Limited freedom, limited right;

Unlimited division, unlimited illusion;

Limited freedom, limited right;

Unlimited island, unlimited fight.

Our hearts are pounding with a heavy beat.

The rights of millions lie at your feet.

A society marching needs true justice.

A world like this needs true union.

We have the land, the strength, the power.

Rise up, overcome, take it over.

Ignored too long, we became stronger.

Tear down the wall and let us run over.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Chthonic. 2007. 'Unlimited Taiwan'.  
<http://chthonic.org/unlimited/> (accessed 26 Feb 2015).

Freddy Lin also attended a press conference in the US organised by the Taiwanese American Association prior to the *UNlimited Taiwan* tour, where he delivered a speech outlining his personal political views and ending with an appeal for US support in the form of recognising Taiwan as an independent, democratic state.

Freddy Lin and his band accepted sponsorship from Taiwan's DPP government, and they used the *Unlimited Taiwan* tour to promote a strong stance on political issues. However, Lin insisted that the band were expressing no-one's political views but their own. During an interview with the Taiwanese journalist Pat Gao, Lin stated: "I'm a musician, but I also have every right to speak about my own views as a Taiwanese citizen."<sup>155</sup> In a separate interview with *Taipei Times*, the band commented:

We formed Chthonic when we were ready to accept and respond to disagreement from other people in music circles regarding our work, but it is inappropriate to label Chthonic as pro-independence, since we were only telling our audience stories about ancient Taiwanese culture and customs.... The objections later became political when we made it clear that we are safeguarding our mother culture and the history of Taiwan, and that we believe it is different from China.<sup>156</sup>

Freddy Lin has been a political activist since Chthonic was established in the mid-1990s. His Taiwanese Independence ideology has been constantly expressed through music and performances. In 2010, Freddy Lin was elected to lead Amnesty International Taiwan and only stepped down in 2014. A year later in 2015 Freddy Lin began his new career as a politician in Taiwan. A new political party named New Power Party (NPP; 時代力量) was formed by Lin. In early 2016, Freddy Lin was elected a legislator of Taiwan.

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<sup>155</sup> Gao, Pat. 2008. 'UNlimited Band'. *Taiwan Review*.

<http://taiwanreview.nat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=25065&CtNode=128> (accessed 11 November 2009)

<sup>156</sup> 'Chthonic Put Spin on Taiwan's Past'. *Taipei Times*. 14 September 2013.

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2003/09/14/2003067797> (accessed on 17 March 2015)

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked at the music of Chthonic, and explored how the band not only attempted to portray their resistance to China, but also used music to create a collective identity of Taiwan. Musically, Chthonic adopts black metal music which originated in Northern Europe, where regional pagan religions had been replaced by Christianity for many centuries. Freddy Lin added three main 'Taiwanese touches' to his music to promote his idea of Taiwanese nationalism. Firstly, the storylines of Lin's lyrics refer to native Taiwanese mythology and history, and reveal the ethnic contradictions between Taiwanese, Japanese and Chinese. Chthonic also uses musical instruments to convey their ideas: the *erhu* is an essential element of Chthonic's compositions. Finally, the use of language also plays an important role in defining Chthonic's stance. Freddy Lin sings and writes lyrics using Taiyu, which has become a political symbol of Taiwanese identity.

Black metal artists of Scandinavia emphasise native, pre-Christian, pagan culture and therefore employ anti-Christian lyrics and imagery and even Satanism as a form of rebellion rooted in the politics of indigeneity. Similarly, Chthonic has employed heavy metal's dark notions and nationalist aims as a framework for the Taiwanese context. In Europe, black metal has been associated with extreme nationalism and far-right, fascist movements which lie beyond the pale of mainstream politics. It is noteworthy that in Taiwan, black metal music can be so closely associated with government. In Taiwan, the extreme sounds of black metal are performed by political activists who align themselves with ruling political parties, and conduct their political discourse in the mainstream language of human rights and democracy. Thus, the DPP used black metal to make Taiwan's opinions heard on the international stage with a loud and discordant voice.

## Conclusion

In the last few decades, the question of Taiwan's national identity has been one of the most hotly debated issues in East Asian politics. Internationally, the One China policy is officially reinforced by the PRC and other countries, and the island of Taiwan is regarded as a part of China. Nevertheless, domestically, since the lifting of martial law in the late 1980s, Taiwanese consciousness and a sense of national identity, which were suppressed under Japanese colonial rule and Chinese authoritarian rule, have increased significantly. However, as Taiwan currently is neither an independent state nor an integrated region of China, the identity of Taiwan is still not clearly defined or well-bounded due to its complicated political context.

In this thesis, I focus on popular music and its relationship to the politics of identity in Taiwan. Popular music is a medium that has been widely consumed across Taiwanese society since its birth on the island in the early 1930s. This sphere of cultural production fulfils the important function of creating, maintaining or sometimes rejecting identities. Through the creation, performance and consumption of popular music, the identity of Taiwan is constantly constructed and negotiated by both the authorities and the people on the island.

The context of this study is the Taiwanisation movement (臺灣本土化運動) and the way that it is linked to the changing representations of Taiwanese identity in popular music. Following an underground start during the 1970s, the Taiwanisation movement that emphasises Taiwan's unique culture and society, and more importantly, an identity different from that of China, was developed by both of the current leading political parties – the KMT and the DPP – and has been maintained by both as an important part of their political strategy and national identity building. The purpose of this study is to look at how the process of Taiwanisation, which has led to the development of Taiwanese consciousness, affects constructs of national identity, and how this has been responded to in the Taiwanese music industry. I also address the

role that key individuals – who often play dual roles as musician and as political activists – have played in this process.

I started my discussion in the late 1970s when Taiwanese consciousness was still suppressed. The Campus Folk Song movement arose during a time when Taiwan was experiencing a series of international political setbacks. To protest against American cultural hegemony, the Taiwanese young elites attempted to form a collective identity through songwriting. In her study of black metal music and national identity construction, Lucas claims that, “Markers of national identity are often consciously constructed and employed to signify specific ideologies imposed upon, and asserted within conceptualisations of collective identity” (Lucas 2010: 44).

The Campus Folk Song Movement was not directly formed and promoted by the Chinese Nationalist rulers but, even so, the government played an important role in the development of this musical movement. As consumerism and nationalism were closely related in the strict controls imposed upon Taiwanese society before martial law was lifted, the popular music market of Taiwan was constantly under surveillance by the authorities, and the majority of the campus folk songs were produced within the parameters of the government’s ideology. The Chinese identity of Taiwan constructed through the campus folk songs was the result of Chinese hegemony under KMT rule.

However, the campus folk songs that were apparently politically correct later served as coded messages, and were re-signified and redistributed as an act of resistance against the authorities by Yang Zujun. As Yang’s actions opened up a new space which allowed for the growth of Taiwanese consciousness, I argue that the Campus Folk Song movement played a role in promoting not only Chinese identity in response to American hegemony, but also nurturing the seeds of a Taiwanese identity that was previously suppressed.



Since the lifting of martial law, the KMT faced radical challenges domestically as well as party fractures, and the shift in policies from the Great China ideology to a Taiwan-centred ideology was seen as a necessary move to hold on its power in Taiwan (Chang 2006: 202–203). To maintain Chinese cultural hegemony, Taiwanese indigenisation was promoted alongside Chinese culture, though a basically China-centric approach still dominated the political prospect (Chang 2006: 189). The changes in politics were immediately responded to by the music industry. In Chapter 3, I used Lin Sheng Xiang and his band as a case study. Through writing Anti-Dam protest music which bound together the land and the people of Taiwan, Lin constructed a collective identity for Taiwanese people who lived in what Lee Teng-hui had termed A Community of Shared Fate. The use of language in the song texts and the choice of musical instruments presented the ideology of multiculturalism in musical form.

My discussion in Chapter 4 explored another strand of the identity-building process in contemporary Taiwan, one that draws on the Taiwanese subculture, Taike (台客). During the late 1990s, Taike culture was adopted ironically by the student band LTK Commune as a means of challenging the political and social norms. As the low class nature of Taike culture stood in contrast to the high status of Chinese national culture, this young elite employed styles of offensive language and obscene performance rooted in Taike culture as a form of rebellion against political and social injustice.

Taike culture is closely connected to the everyday life of rural communities, where long-established religious traditions are still maintained. In this thesis, I have used a cultural phenomenon, the Decorated Electric Vehicle Show (電子花車秀), as an example to illustrate the realities of Taike, i.e. contextualised popular culture in rural Taiwan. The Decorated Electric Vehicle Shows involve hybrid styles and parody, mixing and matching foreign elements with local traditions and popular styles, through the inexact imitation of ‘others’

creating a new, distinctively local culture. The brash, vulgar, even obscene performances of the Decorated Electric Vehicle Shows were never approved by the authorities.

However, when the DPP took power in 2000, a major new cultural movement was started by the new authorities. Local Taiwanese culture was given new value, and new and creative ways of representing local culture were encouraged. Hobsbawm's term, "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm 1983: 1), is taken to mean "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (Hobsbawm 1983: 1). Taike culture, which in the past was an ethnic and class slur, was adopted and re-packaged as a commercial and cultural product by the Taiwanese music industry that could respond to the new political ideology. Since the mid-2000s, the discourse of Taike has focused on self-identity and self-confidence.

While the idea of Taiwanese identity evolved from a regional identity to a national identity with support from the DPP government since the early 2000s, internationally, however, Taiwan is still over-shadowed by China both politically and economically (Gold 1993: 173). As it was not recognised as a sovereign state by other countries, Taiwan's attempts to re-join the UN were rejected. To renew Taiwan's international image and to make a protest rejection to the UN, the DPP cut Taiwan's cultural ties with China and rebranded the island for the international market as an independent country with a modern and hybrid culture (Chang 2006: 201).

Although in Taiwan it was far less popular than Mandopop, the loud and aggressive black metal music of Chthonic was chosen by the DPP to voice Taiwan's disappointment in the international arena, as a suitable candidate to express the Taiwanese people's anger and disappointment. The reluctance of more mainstream Taiwanese artists to join this protest

against Chinese policies serves as a reminder of the economic power that the PRC holds over the Taiwanese music industry through its ability and willingness to deny access to Chinese markets to individual artists who do not toe the party line.

In Taiwan, both the Chinese Nationalists and the DPP have managed and nurtured Taiwanese cultural identity in similar ways since the 1990s. A Taiwan-centred political ideology has been promoted through implantation of cultural policies and education. To the DPP, indigenisation and revitalised cultural traditions were important means for cultural identity building (Chang 2006: 197), and this ideology did have an impact on popular music making.

Musically, in order to in order to reject Chinese identity and emphasise Taiwanese identity, Taiwanese musicians often adopted similar methods to those used by the songwriters of campus folk songs to construct a Chinese identity for Taiwan. The use of language in these songs is one of the most symbolic and direct ways of expressing identity or resistance. To contest American hegemony, the Taiwanese young elite adopted Mandarin in their songs – the national language of China under KMT rule – to stress their difference from the West. Similarly, in the later period, since Mandarin was closely linked to Chinese nationalism, the use of local Taiwanese languages in protest songs not only represented resistance, as they were widely discouraged by the authorities, but also provided a way to promote a form of multiculturalism which came to be a marker of the new Taiwanese identity.

Furthermore, to promote Chinese consciousness, the trope of an imagined China left behind was a common theme for campus folk song writers. By the same token, but this time to emphasise Taiwanese nationalism, it became common for songwriters to use nostalgia to convey a sentimental attachment to the island of Taiwan. While campus folk song singers sang of China's Yangtze River, new Taiyu songs sang of the Danshui River in Taiwan. The use of

instruments also created symbolic links to Chinese or Taiwanese nationalism. The majority of songwriters incorporated traditional instruments into their arrangements to highlight a sense of localisation, but given the shared instrumentarium, often the same instrument – the *erhu* or the *pipa* – could be used in different songs to symbolise Chinese identity and also Taiwanese identity.

The Taiwanese identity constructed in popular music raises questions about authenticity and difference. The history of the local languages such as Taiyu and Hakka that were often used in protest music can be traced back to their origins on the Chinese mainland, and the authentic musical instruments that the songwriters adopted to stress their position not only denoted Taiwan but also China. In addition, the musical genres of Taiwanese protest songs were rooted in popular music styles that originated in the West. The black metal sounds of the band, Chthonic, that the Taiwanese government selected to protest at Western countries' rejection of Taiwan re-joining the UN, is closely related to revolt and anti-authoritarian attitudes. How is this protest music connected with the building of Taiwanese identity that is different from a Chinese identity? I argue that a new Taiwanese identity created through music should accomplish the new ethos of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity within contemporary Taiwanese society, and not deny its past history.

Over the past three decades, Taiwan has experienced a number of major political and cultural identity shifts, from a solely Chinese outlook to a Taiwanese centred situation. It is widely recognised that, in the context of Taiwan, changes in cultural identity are closely connected with its political and historical transformations. As Montserrat Guibernau (2013) points out, political authorities often use one or more key strategies to create a national identity.

Typically this includes the creation and spread of a set of common symbols and rituals intended to create a sense of community and the consolidation of national education and media

systems. Both the Chinese Nationalists and the DPP have played an important role in constructing the identity of the island. However, the role of the authorities should not be overestimated in a history of the relationship between popular music and politics. In these detailed accounts of individual activist musicians and bands, we repeatedly see music leading the political debate, planting the seeds of cultural change at the social margins, before the authorities implement new policies that impel the cultural mainstream to catch up. National identity is never fixed and is constantly transforming, as Stuart Hall states:

Cultural identity... is a matter of “becoming” as well as of “being”. It belongs to the future as much as to the past...identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past...cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a positioning. (Hall 1994: 394–5)

The case of Taiwan is particularly interesting for the study of the relationship between political power, identity and musical expression, because of the complex and rapidly changing nature of the island’s politics over the past three decades. Through cultural and language policies and political ideologies, the authorities aimed to create a sense of community in this fast changing political environment. As Chang Bi-yu argues, the identity of Taiwan has been developed under the government’s invention, intervention and control, so no parts of this identity are more “true” than any other parts (Chang 2009: 180). Taiwanese popular music is a shared cultural symbol, it provides a powerful voice for those seeking change and a means of expressing discontent, and it is therefore listened to attentively by the ruling powers, who seek to co-opt and direct it. This sphere of cultural production has played a major role in shaping the identity of the island, and it will continue to be transformed along with the nation itself.

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